













**L I F E**

**OF**

**WILLIAM VON HUMBOLDT.**







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**OF**

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# LIFE

OF

## WILLIAM VON HUMBOLDT.

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### CHAPTER I.

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WILLIAM VON HUMBOLDT was born in Potsdam, on the 22nd of June, 1767, his father being at the time chamberlain to the Princess Elizabeth of Prussia. The genealogy of the family, the childhood of the gifted brothers, which was spent in Tegel, the family estate, situated near Berlin, and the sketch of their boyish studies, have been detailed in the biography of the younger brother, which precedes this life, and it will suffice, therefore, if we pass quickly over these years, and commence our account from the period when the paths of William and Alexander diverge. Their first tutor was Campe, who left them to preside over an educational establishment in Hamburg, and whose place was then filled by Kunth, who remained the friend of his pupils through life. He entirely superintended their education after the death of their father, and developed their extraordinary talents by the assistance of the first professors in every branch of knowledge, then resident in Berlin. It is interesting to our purpose to know who first introduced William to a knowledge of the ancient languages and literature, as the love for classical antiquity formed



the basis of all his subsequent studies, and characterized him through life. The foundation of his profound Greek studies was laid by Löffler, the author of a very free work on the new platonism of the Fathers of the Church, who was at that time field-chaplain to a regiment of gendarmes, and who was subsequently appointed chief councillor of a consistory, in Gotha. The brothers spent the period before their departure for the university, principally in Berlin, and not in Tegel, as the capital afforded opportunities for hearing private lectures from the most distinguished men, and for other studies, which might suitably prepare them for academic life. At this period, when the studies of the brothers were all in common, and their peculiar talents had not yet become prominent, William was distinguished by a sentimental ideality of character, which accompanied him through life, although it was generally, in subsequent years, governed and overshadowed by the mightier qualities of his genius. At the period of his youth, sentimentality of feeling, and an exalted enthusiasm were the order of the day, and Goethe's *Werther*, and Schiller's "*Don Carlos*," had only increased that tendency. It cannot, therefore, be a matter of surprise, that Humboldt was at this time, excessively sentimental. He literally revelled in feelings, wished to improve himself and others, and joined associations, which, for that purpose, entered into self-examining and explaining correspondence, conducted in a secret cypher, or in Hebrew characters. The years of his youth were influenced by this harmless, searching sentimentality, which united in its sphere the charms of friendship and tender affection, with those of scientific investigation.

This tendency followed him to the university, and nearly all his friends, such as Steiglitz, the Count Dohna-Schlobitten, even Kunth the tutor, took part in these sentimental friendships and mutual improvement alliances; the love of association, and of secret societies, being as prevalent at this period, as sentimentalism.

Female society also tended to strengthen this quality in William von Humboldt; by accidental meetings, he became connected with the most distinguished women of the age, such as Mdle. de Briest, afterwards Madame de Rochow, and then de Fouqué, under which name she has published many novels; Rahel, celebrated for her letters, and of Henriette Herz, the still surviving widow of Professor Marcus Herz, who was as celebrated for her beauty as for her mental attainments. With her, Humboldt entered into the most intimate friendship and confidential correspondence.

But qualities diametrically opposed to this sentimentality, were at the same time developed in Humboldt's character, namely, a calm and cold reason, cutting satire and irony, quiet humour, a most cultivated dialectic power, a universal love of research, of investigation, of argument, and of discussion, in short, everything which subsequently so characterized his being, that the sentimental feature of his character remained unsuspected by many. We shall even find that he frequently, in social intercourse, purposely concealed his feelings, and even adopted an entirely opposite character.

But such momentary coldness was, therefore, by no means intentional or deceptive. An incident in his university life gives us a remarkable example of this fine feeling concealing itself behind humour or self-negation and united to an admirable strength of soul. He was bathing one evening, with his friend Steiglitz, in the Leine, near Göttingen, and was carried away by a current; after resisting for some time in vain, he thought himself lost, and called out: "Steiglitz, I am drowning, but it does not matter." His friend, however, at once leaped into the water, and saved him. Humboldt subsequently describes his sensations; they were those of the tenderest and noblest friendship for Steiglitz, and of affectionate remembrance of distant beloved ones; but nothing of this appeared in his immediate expressions; he joked and laughed as he walked home in the light of the moon, with the friend

who had saved his life. In later years, also, when he counted the most distinguished men among his friends, the personal expression of his esteem remained ever cold and measured, although in letters he is frequently affectionate and enthusiastic enough. This is quite right. Love and esteem were established as unalterable facts, which were proved by his whole life, but which he preferred to avoid expressing verbally.

The calm investigating spirit formed an essential feature in his character, and was probably confirmed by constant intercourse with such men as Engel, Biester, David Friedländer, &c., who were all clear-headed, free-minded thinkers. With such friends, Humboldt could cultivate his natural talents, and if he excites admiration by the precocious boldness of his thoughts, he probably ascribed his own early development, partly to his friendship with these men, whose æsthetic narrowness has, fortunately, however, not influenced his nature.

Besides the advantages of a beautiful family estate, of the care of an excellent and gifted mother, and of opportunities for enjoying the best education in one of the most lively capitals of Germany, we must not omit to mention the state and the man under whose protection the brothers Humboldt entered on their course of life. Frederic the Great still lived ; he inspired all his subjects with heroism and patriotism, and was ever present to the youthful imagination of William and Alexander as the highest ideal of a hero and a king. He died in 1786, as they were on the point of quitting Berlin for the university. With the death of the great king a period of decadence and internal corruption commenced in the Prussian state, and it was therefore a fortunate circumstance for the brothers Humboldt that they left Berlin at that time, and cherished the untarnished noble impressions of their youth ever present to their souls. They were thus qualified to become the models of a better generation on their return, and when the fatherland required men with energy and power to pull down and rebuild,

then the name of Humboldt was foremost among those summoned to the arduous task.

The brothers entered on their university life together, and proceeded to Frankfort-on-the-Oder, where they devoted themselves principally to the special studies for their intended future courses. William heard lectures on jurisprudence, and Alexander attended those on political economy. Among the men with whom William von Humboldt formed a lasting friendship in Frankfort, we may mention especially the Count Alexander of Dohna-Schlobitten, who was subsequently associated with Humboldt in an endeavour to revive the educational establishments in Prussia. Count Dohna met the brothers Humboldt again in the university of Göttingen, whither he proceeded in 1788.

William and Alexander seem to have left Frankfort for Göttingen in the spring of 1788, and to have remained in this latter place about two years. Göttingen was at that time acknowledged the first of the German universities, for Leipzig and Halle had already sunk in public favour, and Jena only rose to fame between 1790 and 1800. No place could have been more advantageous for Humboldt's studies than Göttingen, for it has always been the seat of historical and archæological science, and is so to this day. Here HEYNE taught—a man who has done much for the restoration of archæology, and who may be termed the immediate forerunner of its most brilliant epoch. The brothers enjoyed his hospitality, and appreciated it, and, beside the influence which he doubtless exercised over their studies, they owe principally to him their friendship with his son-in-law, George Forster, which probably arose in the course of this summer.

The ardent spirit of Humboldt found abundant means for improvement in Göttingen, and what was not attainable by lectures was furnished by the splendid library of the university. He devoted himself with especial ardour to archæology, and to the study of the Kantian philosophy. While pursuing these

studies he still took part in those of his brother, and thus extended his love for universality of knowledge more and more, without detriment to the profundity of his learning, which was as great as its universality. His studies embraced languages and art, nature and life.

Among his university friends ranks the medical student already mentioned as having saved his life, Johann Steiglitz, who subsequently attained to great eminence in his profession, and as a critical author; also the well-known associate of Count Schlabrendorf, *Oelsner*, who spent the principal part of his life in Paris, and A. W. Schlegel, famed in Germany as the translator of Shakspeare. Humboldt remained in Göttingen for some time after his studies there had been concluded, and corresponded with some of the most distinguished men in literature; he also made it the central station on several shorter and longer journeys, which he undertook to extend his knowledge and his connexions. But Göttingen was the last stage of his youthful education, and the starting-point of his virile activity. What a list of great and distinguished men have proceeded from the Giorgia-Augusta school! The name of Humboldt will certainly not be the least important among them, and both brothers have often in after life gratefully acknowledged that they received the noblest part of their education in this celebrated high school.

As we have now arrived at the period when the youth Humboldt grows into the man, and takes his place among the intellectual rulers of the world, we will cast a glance at the unusually favourable exterior circumstances under which he was born, and which accompanied him through life. A lucky star seems to have presided at his birth, to have granted all his wishes, and fulfilled all his desires. The great talents he possessed were adequately developed by the most favourable worldly circumstances, and whatever could conduce to the improvement of such high natural abilities, was procured with the most discriminating

care. But Humboldt would probably have been as great without this care, for the love of self-improvement was one of the strongest impulses of his soul. His mind was open to all impressions, and the only requirement of such a mind was to begin and end his life in a period of progress and of great events, and this also fell to Humboldt's lot.

Having formed his taste and judgment by the study of the ancients, he became the intimate friend and adviser of the two great pillars of German literature, Schiller and Goethe, and although he never produced such brilliant works, his name must be intimately blended with theirs, from the influence he exercised on the opinions and the productions of these two great German poets.

The revival of philosophical science by Kant also took place during the youthful years of Humboldt's life. This new system made a great impression upon him at a very early period, and he adopted it in the strictest sense of the word. It remained the basis of his thought, and served him as a guide, even when he went beyond it. He is justly counted among those who extended the boundaries of this system of philosophy, partly by the æsthetic researches which he prosecuted in conjunction with Schiller, partly by the establishment of a philosophy of language which we owe to his studies in this direction. In political life, also, his star did not desert him, but permitted him to take part in the so urgently required re-organization of the fatherland, in conjunction with the most honoured names of the age, and to quit this sphere at the right moment, when nothing more could be expected but loss of the achieved honour and reputation. And in the leisure moments of his old age he devoted himself to linguistic and comparative researches, and became as great and important on this field as his brother is on the field of natural history.

Humboldt's character is mirrored in the choice of his friends and in his friendships; the highest, greatest, and noblest minds were intimately allied with him.

He was formed for love and friendship; spent a great part of his life in confidential intercourse with chosen spirits, and remained throughout life true to those on whom he had once bestowed his affection, his esteem, or his confidence. He was the same in happiness as in misfortune, and above all, he kept holy the impressions of his youthful years. The names of G. Forster, F. A. Wolf, Schiller, Goethe, recur frequently in Humboldt's life. They illustrate and exalt his glorious personality, and his name shines as constantly in the annals of their life.

But above every feeling of friendship rose that of fraternal love. In it the tenderest and most affectionate sensations were blended on both sides, and the noblest confidence, the purest esteem characterised the brothers throughout the long course of their lives, when united or separated. Only two feelings were perhaps higher still than this sentiment, that which subsequently united William to his wife, and his love for Schiller. To meet these two again was the thought which alone occupied his mind in his last hours.

We must now resume our account of Humboldt's life, and return to his stay at Gottingen. In the autumn of 1788 he made a journey on the Rhine, and spent four days in the company of Forster, who had some time before taken up his residence in Mayence, as councillor and librarian to the university there. He describes these four days as the happiest of the whole journey, and felt as gratified as surprised by the affectionate kindness he met with. Forster's wife, afterwards the wife of the author Huber, took a lively interest in the discussions of the men, Humboldt calls her one of the first of women, and remained her friend until his death. Forster himself gave the talented youth a letter to F. Jacobi, the philosopher, whom Humboldt did not neglect to visit.

Such a celebrated personage was important and instructive for our young Humboldt, who could not fail to be interested, for a time at least, by a man who constituted himself the opponent of Kant, and

the subsequent systems of German philosophy; and who, although unable to create an equally important philosophic system, was, as a feeling thinker, so prolific in hints and warnings against the logic and scholastic errors of the systematisers. Opposed to Jacobi, Humboldt did not now show himself an exclusive Kantist, for he placed the thinking individual higher than the system, and much in Jacobi's manner pleased him, especially the harmony which pervaded his thoughts and appearance, and his peculiar mode of introducing his ideas by artistic illustrations.

On the 31st October, Humboldt arrived in Pempelfort, the well-known hospitable village near Düsseldorf, where Jacobi used to spend the summer months of the year, and on the 8th September he was at Gottingen again. Immediately on his return he writes to Forster, thanking him, first, for the kind reception which had made his stay in Mayence so agreeable. He says in his letter, "It is a great and noble pleasure to receive attention from men whose head and heart command our esteem, and in how high a degree you afforded me this gratification! I cannot tell you how deeply and gratefully I was affected by the kind manner in which you received me on my first introduction to you, and by the confidence which you afterwards reposed in me. Be assured, dear friend, that it will never be forgotten, and that the wish will ever live within me to be able one day to show you that I am ever striving to be more worthy of such kind and friendly sentiments." He then relates the impressions of his journey, or rather only those which Jacobi made upon him. From Mayence he went down the Rhine to Aix-la-Chapelle and Düsseldorf. In Aix he remained ten days, because Dohm, who was formerly his teacher, would not let him leave sooner, fearing that he would not see him for some years. Humboldt, however, met him in the following year, but afterwards not again for twenty-five years. He then continued:—"Jacobi received me with the greatest and most



unexpected kindness, with a friendliness of which I might have been proud had I not known that I owed it solely to your recommendation. I lived with him, but without your interposition he would hardly have taken such interest in a Berlin man, as I am, with a friend of Engel, Herz, Biester, and so many anti-Jacobites. I am deeply grateful to you for the connexion, for his society was highly interesting to me. He is a remarkable thinker, rich in new, great, and profound ideas, which he expresses in a spirited and eloquent manner; his character seems to be so noble that I cannot discriminate whether he has won my heart or my head."

This is the oldest letter of Humboldt's which we possess, and his subsequent letters to Forster show the same admiration for Jacobi's character and learning, although he frequently combats his assertions in his correspondence with him. In a letter written to Forster about this time, he criticises an essay which Forster had written on English literature. He says:

• "Essays on literature have their difficulties. If the supply of materials is scanty, they are meagre and unsatisfactory; if it is great, as I think yours was, it is difficult to make a right selection, and the writer runs the risk of producing a mere catalogue of names. Therefore your essay seems to me to be masterly. It seems to run so smoothly in an artfully spun thread, and yet the reader does not anywhere detect the art which has been necessary to spin it. I was especially pleased by the manner in which you show the influence of the British national spirit on the literature. A knowledge of the most modern authors of a country and of their writings, is certainly very interesting, but the reflecting reader desires more; he will know why the authors in this country write in such a spirit and in no other, why certain branches of literature flourish and others are neglected. And this, I think, you have shown excellently. The account of the religious condition of England is written in a spirit in which I would like to see much more written."

After the summer of 1789, Humboldt was rarely in Göttingen, but spent his time in longer and shorter journeys in and out of Germany. He visited Hanover, where he was personally known, principally with the intention of meeting with Friedrich Jacobi, and spent five days here very pleasantly, visiting few families, and passing the principal portion of his time with Jacobi and other eminent men residing in Hanover.

In such consideration and intimate relation stood the youth of twenty-two, with men who at that time were foremost in the ranks of literature and science. His letters contain an inexhaustible treasure of characteristic sketches and of unfailing judgment, of which, however, our space forbids an extended insertion, and it must suffice if we merely point to them as the best evidences of the greatness of the man.

Very soon greater events than literary debates in the lively circles of a small German town were to occupy our hero. The political crisis in France had arrived, and the revolution commenced. The victory of the people was decided by the taking of the Bastille.

Few in Germany had anticipated and watched the state of things in France with greater enthusiasm than Campe, the first tutor of William and Alexander von Humboldt. He had been living for some time in Brunswick, where he had an agreeable official post, and, at the same time, presided over a bookselling establishment, and gained an increasing popularity as author of many juvenile books and accounts of travels. He frequently travelled for the benefit of his health, and now determined to proceed to Paris, to be present at the funeral of French despotism. He was soon ready, and found a travelling companion in William von Humboldt, for whom it was of great interest to see Paris at this period, especially under such favourable auspices.

Campe has published an account of this journey in letters to his daughter, from which we shall quote.

Two friends, he states, wished to accompany him, and the three met in Holzminden on the 18th July. The next morning they started in the best possible humour. Their first night was passed in the bathing place of Driburg. It was past midnight when they arrived, and they went out with lanterns to see the country. Campe congratulated himself on the choice of his companions, and says: "One should always travel thus—young with old, and old with young people. The old ones would gain in good humour and merriment, the young ones would be protected against excesses. You cannot think how merry we three are even in such situations where others would hang their heads. Wherever we arrive we communicate our good temper to the whole household, and even to the beggars in the streets. Laughing we arrive, laughing we transact our affairs, laughing we mount our carriage again, and every one laughs with us."

They travelled through the uninteresting districts of Westphalia, and crossed the Rhine at Uerdingen, and before they arrived at the boundaries of Brabant they received the news of the terribly great events of the 12th, 13th, and 14th July. The decisive blow had been struck. The intelligence, which reached them at Aix-la-Chapelle filled them with delight at the brave Parisians, but with disappointment that the drama at whose commencement they wished to be present had already begun. French fugitives crossed the boundaries; in Liege the news came that disturbances had broken out in Brabant, through which province they were to travel, and that at Brussels the excitement was only subdued by the presence of the military. This sounded very dangerous, but not to them. Their desire to watch the nation's struggle for liberty, and its manly endeavour to regain its rights, was too strong not to outweigh all considerations of personal inconvenience.

On the 3rd August they arrived in Paris and took up their residence in the Faubourg St. Germain, rue des petits Augustins, and the next day entered at once

into the excitement of the city. Their stay has been accurately detailed by Campe in his works, and we shall therefore merely mention the principal incidents. They spent their days in seeing what was remarkable in Paris, mixed with the people, and listened to the speeches and debates held in the public streets, returning to their dwelling late at night, tired and exhausted. On the 12th August they proceeded to Versailles, and succeeded in obtaining a place in the crowded galleries of the National Assembly, through the intervention of the great Mirabeau, at whose special invitation Campe had gone to Paris. The uproar was so tremendous that it was some time before they could hear the speeches; when the session was over they spent the remainder of the day in seeing the splendours of Versailles.

Provided with an introduction to the officer of the National Guard on duty, they were shown to a good place again on the following day. Towards noon the Assembly were to present an address to the king, and our travellers succeeded in joining the procession of deputies, and thus being present at all the ceremonies. In the evening they returned to Paris by way of Marly. A few days later they went on a pilgrimage to Rousseau's grave. They saw his room, in which the furniture was still arranged as when he lived, but found his grave and his favourite resting places very much neglected.

It cannot be doubted that Humboldt made many new acquaintances among the literary men of the day even during this excited time, and we see from his letters that "the honest Mercier," Herr von Meister and Berguin, the author of several books for children, received them with especial attention. Of other learned men whom he met with, he names the great astronomer Lalande, the academician Marmontel, and the philologist Villoison, the best French archeologist, with the exception perhaps of Barthelemy. But the period appointed for their visit to Paris had now elapsed, and they quitted it reluctantly on the 27th August, re-

turning homewards by way of Champagne, Metz, and Mayence.

Humboldt's enthusiasm was not so great as that of Campe, and he left France with far less glowing expectations for the future. Forster writes to Jacobi some days after the return of the travellers; "The wanderer William Humboldt is here still, and although he speaks no longer of Parisian—not Paradisaical—freedom, still he helps us to season life, which without such seasoning would indeed be very insipid."

Humboldt intended to spend the remainder of the summer in a journey to the Upper Rhine, Suabia and Switzerland, as he wished to neutralize and temper the effect of the political excitement and super-civilization of Parisian life on his mind by intercourse with his intellectual friends, and in the enjoyment of nature. Before he could leave Mayence, however, he was partly drawn into the paper war at that time existing between the Berlin philosophers and Forster, Jacobi, and others, on account of supposed secret jesuitical societies, which had ostensibly been discovered, and were the occasion of the display of much liberal intolerance. Humboldt exerted his influence to temper the acerbity of party animosity, and induced Forster to modify many of his tirades.

His journey through Switzerland was beautifully recorded in his letters to Forster. Men and scenes are graphically and poetically described, and every letter is a splendid specimen of his philosophy.

From Mayence Humboldt travelled over Mannheim to Heidelberg, remaining two days in Mannheim. Iffland, the hero and ornament of the stage there, was absent, and Humboldt regretted his absence the more as he wished to make his personal acquaintance. The theatre was not good, although *Emilia Galotti* was performed. The ladies, who were tolerably good performers, failed, to his idea, to give the noble simplicity of *Emilia* and the great mind and deep feeling of *Orsina*. In the picture gallery few pieces attracted

his admiration, among these principally a head by Carlo Dolce.

From Heidelberg, probably on the 28th of September, he wrote to Forster, "Do you think sometimes of the fortnight I spent with you? It was perhaps the happiest period in my life, and the remembrance of it even yet affords me great enjoyment. I harmonize with no one as I do with you; and it is my great pride that all this came of itself without exterior aid, that I owe your friendship only to yourself; for it shows me that you deem me worthy of you, and you can indeed not feel how much that thought is to me. For you cannot know how I admire the fruitful profusion of ideas which occur to you on every occasion, the lively clearness with which you express them; how I honour your zeal for the good and the true, and your consideration for what others esteem good and true; and how tenderly I love the heart which so readily opens itself, and gladdens others by love. And yet you should know all this, in order to feel fully what you are to me."

In Heidelberg he remained some days, and made some new friends, and proceeded thence to Tübingen, whence he writes, on the 28th September, of the impression which the scenery of Heidelberg made on him, in words which may rank with the best descriptions which poets have made of this singularly beautiful spot, in prose or verse. "The view from the castle of Heidelberg pleased me more than any other I had seen in these districts. The shores of the Rhine below Mayence, even where they are most beautiful, near Bingen and St. Goar, have always a certain uniformity, always vinebergs or naked rocks; and the neighbourhood of Mayence is pleasing enough, and varied, but does not form a whole. But at Heidelberg, the neighbouring high mountains on the shores of the Neckar, with the town at their base, form a great and beautiful group. There is true character in this view, and the impression it leaves on the soul is profound and enduring."

From here, he went by the extremely beautiful path along the windings of the Neckar to Heilbronn, on the way to Stuttgart. Here he visited Professor Abel, one of the clearest heads in the philosophical world, who held an appointment at the academy there. He also made the acquaintance of Reuss, the professor of political economy; of Schwab, the father of the poet; of the librarian Drück, and of the poet Schubart. With Schwab and Abel he seemed much pleased, but says little of the others.

From Stuttgart, Humboldt went by way of Tübingen to Constance, and arrived in Zurich in the commencement of October. He wrote to Forster about one person only he met with here, but it is such an interesting description that we cannot refrain from inserting it. "Doubtless," he writes to Forster, "Lavater interests you most of all my acquaintance here. I spent several hours daily with him; and as he did not interrupt his usual occupations on my account, I saw him in so many characteristic situations, that I had full opportunity for observing him. My expectations were great, in consequence of what Jacobi had told me of him, and from several of his productions, which seemed to me to bear traces of deep and original genius. I anticipated a profusion of new, great, suggestive—even if only half-true or dreamy—ideas. But I was disappointed; and not only disappointed because I had expected so much, but because I found so little. I could have numbered the interesting ideas which I heard from him during the fortnight, and I would be ashamed of comparing to it a single day spent with Jacobi or yourself. Here and there he shows a free and acute perception; but his mind is too narrow, and has neither the restless activity with which real geniuses seek the undiscovered but supposed truth, nor the fertile eagerness with which they seize it when found. Constant allusion to himself, vanity, the expression of stupid and insipid sentiment, playing on words, waste his strength. This would probably all be different if he possessed real

erudition, if he had only thought more of the ideas of others, or if he still read more. But he lives only in his own ideas; and his occupations, which I have now had frequent opportunities of observing, are principally trifling, such as the regulating his physiognomic charts, his judgments expressed in single, generally lame hexameters, correspondence, the execution of an infinite number of trifling commissions for all kinds of people, occasional poems, &c." It seems, indeed, surprising how much he thought of the exterior form. Humboldt describes and details the pedantic arrangements of Lavater's room, the number of cases with letters, superscriptions, &c. On several of them names were pasted. "I found many of my friends there, principally females. In these cases he puts such of his works which may interest the person. He gave me the portfolio bearing the name of one of his lady friends, with whom I am also intimately acquainted, to read. What did it contain? Nothing but partly pietistic, partly sentimental poems, all utterly devoid of ideas, neatly copied on fine paper, with an engraved border" Humboldt could not perceive why he spent so much time on mere form. His most interesting conversations with him were upon physiognomy on German authors, and on the standard by which intellectual productions are measured.

But if Humboldt was disappointed with the prophet of Zurich, he was all the more delighted with the splendid views on the Zurich lake. He proceeded from there to Zug and Luzern, and then made pedestrian excursions into the Oberland of Bern. The weather was beautifully clear, and not a cloud obscured the highest mountains. He went through the well-known valleys and passes to Spital, in the valley of the upper-bar, with the intention of ascending the Gothard, but a snowstorm forced him to return. He writes to Forster: "I spent very happy days in these wild districts. Never was my soul so filled with such great images of irresistible, all-annihilating force, such obstinate, unconquerable strength; the feeling of a



countless course of past centuries never was so present to my soul, and never had such a view of eternally-distant, destroying and re-creating futures dawned upon me. When I sometimes looked upwards from a narrow enclosed valley, to the highest unascendable summits of the mountains round me, my soul was overpowered by ideas of solitude, of loneliness, by glances into the far distance from those giddy heights, by anxious expectation of what might be beyond those mountain summits; and then the present, the tangible, the certain, vanished from my soul, and only the past, the future, the distant, and the uncertain, floated before my excited, dreamy phantasy. My dear Forster, we must, some time, make a real mountain journey together. It is less expensive and less tedious than a journey to England, and must be equally important to you as naturalist."

From Spital Humboldt went to Bern, thence to Geneva and Lasanne, where he was hospitably received by the councillor de Rougemont, and proceeded from there to Basle. There are unfortunately no accounts existing of this no less interesting part of his journey. From Carlsruhe he wrote on the 29th November to Forster, whose family had been increased by the birth of a little girl:—"I rejoice that the sight of the new-born maiden has induced you to choose the softer name of Clärchen, instead of the barbaric boy's name you intended to adopt from the Anglo-Saxons and Northmen." Humboldt seems to have been averse to the real northern element. This element in Shakespeare, and a certain roughness connected with it, may have been the reason that he was less intimate with his works than with those of the ancients and of his native poets. He speaks with great delight of Ariosto in his æsthetical essays, while he rarely mentions Shakespeare.

In the beginning of December our traveller returned to Mayence. Forster accompanied him to Frankfurt, where they separated, and never met again in life. While Humboldt, in his love for liberty, always

maintained a dignified calmness, and held the greatest merit to consist, not in immediate action, but rather in personal and individual development, Forster was carried away by political agitation and was destroyed in its currents.

CHAPTER II.

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OTHER scenes are now presented before us. The various connexions of our youth of twenty-two are increased by new and more important ones, and love springs up in the heart so long devoted only to friendship.

In the winter 1789—1790, Humboldt spent some time in Erfurt and Weimar, and this stay was important in its results on his whole future life, for here he made the acquaintance of the coadjutor Von Dalberg, of his future wife, and of Schiller. Of the coadjutor Von Dalberg, Humboldt had the highest opinion, and said of him :—"The longer I have the opportunity of associating with Dalberg, the more I feel convinced of the purity of his intentions, and the excellence of his moral character." But another house in Erfurt formed at that time a centre of hospitality and good society, and became a great attraction to Humboldt, namely, that of the Chamber president C. F. von Dacheröden. This family belongs to the old Saxon and Thuringian nobility, and have their estate, which bears their name, a mile beyond Mühlhausen on the river Unstrut. The Herr von Dacheröden in question, a relative of Von Dalberg, had formerly been vice president of the Prussian chamber at Halberstadt, and was married to a Baroness Posadowsky, heiress of Burgörner, a large estate in the Prussian part of the Duchy of Mansfeldt. One daughter was the fruit of this marriage, and the most careful education had been bestowed upon her.

Dacheröden had, at the period referred to, retired from his office, and his house in Erfurt was the resort of the best society of the place, and of all the eminent men who visited the town.

Caroline von Dacheröden, the daughter, was the future wife of William von Humboldt. She could not be esteemed perfectly beautiful, for her figure was even slightly deformed, but her head was truly fascinating, and her eyes of an admirable brilliancy and expression. She was, however, more distinguished for her intellect, which was of an order rarely met with in women, and formed to be understood and appreciated by a William von Humboldt. She seemed made for him. The sentimental and feminine part of his nature, which in outward life he suppressed, here found its right focus, and the tenderest devotedness on his part was amply repaid. To a rich and tender heart she united such a masculine education that she was afterwards able to read the ancient Greek poets with her husband in the original. She seemed at the same time born to be the life of society, so that wherever she went the best and highest natures crowded around her, and her house was always the seat of the highest intellectual life. Over Humboldt her influence from the first moment during her life and beyond it was irresistible; when she was dead his days were devoted to her memory. To her he dedicated a whole collection of sentimental sonnets, in which the emotions and thoughts of the latter years of his life have been preserved to us.

Owing to her, Humboldt formed several new connexions, and, above all, the lasting one with Schiller. Caroline von Dacheröden was intimately acquainted with two sisters, the Mesdemoiselles von Lengfeldt in Rudolstadt, of whom one was married to a Herr von Beulwitz and afterwards to the Freiherr von Wolzogen, while the other had shortly before been betrothed to Schiller; these formed a circle of friends who remained true to each other through life. Schiller, who had been appointed to an extraordinary

professorship in Jena, which he hoped would enable him to marry in the course of the following year, frequently visited Weimar, where his betrothed was then living with her sister, Frau von Beulwitz, and it was in Weimar where he and Humboldt first met. Their first meeting soon ripened into a more intimate acquaintance, which ended in one of the noblest friendships, exercising a beneficial influence on both. Two natures, such as Schiller and Humboldt, could not fail soon to understand each other, and the desire for a fruitful intellectual life subsequently induced Humboldt to live several years in Jena. When he left that place he remained in constant correspondence with Schiller.

After his betrothal, Humboldt did not remain long in Weimar and Erfurt, as he intended to pass through a probationary course in Berlin, and then procure an appointment in the government, after which he purposed celebrating his marriage.

Among the other important acquaintances which Humboldt must have made this winter, is that of F. A. Wolff. The latter was at this time a newly-risen star of archæology in the university of Halle, and passed through Erfurt at the period of Humboldt's stay there.

We find it nowhere recorded whether Humboldt visited Göttingen this winter, or how long he remained there. In the summer of 1790 we find him in Berlin, whither he returned after the completion of his studies and of his first travels, with the intention of entering into the lists of public life. His brother Alexander was at the same time travelling through the Netherlands, France, and Germany, in the company of Forster.

William could not have been pleased by this stay in Berlin, as Frederic the Great had been succeeded by a regent, who by no means followed in the footsteps of his predecessor. Immorality, wastefulness, a reactionary, childish policy, and a hypocritical pietism, were the order of the day. Society was demoralized

to the lowest ranks, and much suffering had to be endured before real enthusiasm could again be revived among the people. It may easily be imagined what Humboldt's feelings were when he returned to Berlin under such circumstances, with the intention of entering upon a public career. But he found his beloved mother and many old friends and acquaintances, in whose society he cultivated his talents and made his first attempts at authorship in Biester's *Monthly Journal*, to which such men as Herz, Engel, Friedländer, &c., contributed. Among the women who at that time exercised an influence over the intellectual world of Berlin, and in whose society William von Humboldt took a prominent position, were Henriette Herz, the wife of the above-named Marcus Herz, and the reflecting, truth-seeking Rahel Levin, who, by her remarkable letters, has become for us the representative of the great intellectual revolution of that period. In their saloons Humboldt made the acquaintance of all the great men then in Berlin,—among them, Schleiermacher, the most unbending thinker of the romantic epoch, Gentz, who, spite of the great difference in their opinions, became a friend of Humboldt, and of many others.

But his entrance into the business of life occupied Humboldt's time principally in this and a portion of the next year, so that he could devote but little of it to correspondence with distant friends. Forster writes to Jacobi (26th Dec., 1790): "The Humboldts are both well, but both in a different manner. The eldest is councillor of legation, and at the same time attaché to the high court of Berlin, where he is making his trial session. When his year is past, he will take office in Halberstadt, and probably marry. The younger one is in Hamburg, studying the practical part of bookkeeping, he philosophizes there, has visited Christian Stolberg and is full of his praise, goes out to collect mosses which grow in winter, and writes amusing letters full of wit, good nature, and sentiment. The eldest is still the excellent man he

always was." And on the 6th August, 1791, he again writes to Jacobi about these brothers, when William had determined to give up official life and devote himself exclusively to his own higher studies:—"Alexander Humboldt is in Freiberg and begins to die off for me. William is dead to me long ago; he intends to marry Caroline von Dacheröden, in Erfurt, and is, in his present humour, going to retire from all public activity, which, with his talents, is much to be regretted. Alexander wants to do all the more, but has not physical strength enough for it."

Humboldt indeed began at this period to be lost to his more distant friends, although he never quite dropped these relations so dear to him, and resumed them again when his retirement from public life left him more at leisure to follow the requirements of his head and heart. His correspondence with his betrothed was probably uninterrupted during the whole time of his absence, but his acquaintance with Schiller was as yet superficial, and seems not to have become more intimate till after 1791, when they lived at less distance from each other. Alexander left Hamburg in the spring of 1791, visited his mother, brother, and friends in Berlin, and then proceeded to Freiberg in July of the same year, where he studied geognosy and mining operations until March of the following year.

But the elder brother was also anxious to quit Berlin as soon as possible, for he could not feel at ease in his office under the rulers of the day, although he is wisely silent on this subject in his letters. He could not hope to be able to prevent much evil or to effect much good, and although his friends wished him to remain at his post to be ready if affairs should take a different turn, he could not determine upon such a course. He wished to marry and live in his family circle, and also to give more time to his studies of life and men. Philosophy did not seem sufficient to him for this purpose, and his former philological studies had convinced him that for his views completeness of

scientific cultivation could only be found in a thorough and fundamental comprehension of the old, and especially of the Greek, world and literature. For this, several years of perfect leisure from business were requisite, and where better could he find this than in the stillness of country life, sufficiently retired from the excitements and dangers of the capital, on one of the large estates of his father-in-law which were already almost his, surrounded only by the happiness which the love and the society of a congenial wife affords. It was principally the longing for such a complete self-education which induced the young man to quit for the present the important public sphere opened for him. He resigned his appointment, and left Berlin in the summer of 1791, and only kept the title of a Prussian councillor of legation. Ten years—longer probably than he at first anticipated—he spent in scientific and literary activity and in travels. This was perhaps the happiest period of his life, and most important in its fruits! The whole richness of his fertile genius was developed in undisturbed and observing retirement; the most eminent representatives of science and literature visited him in his solitude and influenced his future labours, and he was able, from his secure retreat, to watch the increasing misery of political life, and the unfortunate issue of the French revolutionary struggle. His happy destiny preserved his activity for a better period.

Humboldt was married to Caroline von Dacheröden, in July, 1791. The happiness of this alliance was an important element in Humboldt's fortunate life, but the merit of this happiness is owing in no small degree to himself. All the force of will and good intentions, of which Humboldt was capable, centred in this point. When he had attained the certainty that Caroline von Dacheröden was to be his wife, he immediately made the vow to make her happy under any circumstances. He never forgot this vow during his whole life, and fulfilled it faithfully to the best of his ability. But it needed not the compulsion of a



vow, every day he would anew and voluntarily have entered into the engagement, which never ceased to be his only bliss. When the beloved wife was dangerously ill in her first childbed, and the medical men were fearful of the consequences, Humboldt believed that he would not be able to endure life after the terrible loss, and in his anguish, gave as a reason for his suicidal purpose, that he could not know whether the beloved one might not stand in need of him in the future life. During the long years that his wife lived with him on earth, and constituted his greatest happiness, this zeal continued in every circumstance of life, to the complete negation and forgetfulness of self, sacrificing even privileges which would seem inseparable from such an excess of love. But he enjoyed the happiness of knowing the tenderness of his heart to be reciprocated, and the tenderness of his own heart beamed upon him clothed in feminine grace. Judging from some letters of Madame von Humboldt, which have been published, we should call her a romantic genius, as opposed to him whose mind was imbued by the spirit of the Ancients. Her education, nay, her erudition, not even her partiality for intellectual pleasures and for art, could outweigh the eminently feminine qualities of her soul. She had a particular partiality for paintings and for music, while Humboldt, in other respects so varied and artistic in his mental acquirements, had no taste for the peculiarly feminine art element, that of tone—in which he resembles the great critic Lessing. The feminine feature of his mind is always concealed by the strength of his reason, so that it bears a manly character. His wife speaks of her eldest daughter once in a letter to Rahel Levin, and concludes with the very characteristic words: "She has something harsh and tender, at the same time, in her character, and, in this, resembles her father." But the sentimentally tender element in Madame von Humboldt's character appears in an appropriate feminine form, still sufficiently modified to bear the stamp of sense

and reason. This romantic feature was combined with the most peaceful cheerfulness, and her truly feminine gentleness was joined to a real strength of soul. When Humboldt lost his eldest son in Rome, Schiller at once felt convinced that the afflicted mother would rise above this heavy grief. He wrote to his friend at the time: "A strong soul with a fine, tender sensibility, is certainly the happiest gift of Providence, it has been granted to her, and so she will be able to bear the unalterable." Humboldt thought the description very apt, and replied: "Her nature has remained true to itself, even in this crisis. There is nothing sullen or darkly melancholy in her: as you justly observe, dear Schiller, she is a strong soul, with the finest, tenderest sensibility." And, from all letters and other testimonies which we have, she always appears as a loving, tender mother, and as an affectionate and anxious nurse.

In society she occupied a no less prominent position. She possessed all the qualities of mind, grace, amiability, and conversational power, which could make her the central attraction of an extensive circle, and possessed them in such a high degree that she compensated for any wants of her husband in this respect. Humboldt was master in the art of social intercourse, but practised this quality, in its attracting or repellant form, so arbitrarily and so consciously, that one involuntarily approached him very warily, and would have frequently, without this caution, been much disappointed. Humboldt only gave himself, frankly and freely, to a few favourite friends, and esteemed fellow-students. Indifferent persons had frequently to feel his superiority, or his temporary aversion, in supercilious sarcasm or veiled irony, without being in the least able to oppose the skilful master in the art. But his wife was, on the contrary, a thoroughly social character, born to shed love and friendship in the richest profusion. In the early portion of their married life, when Humboldt lived only for science, literature, and a very select circle of congenial friends, she

had not much opportunity of showing these qualities, which appeared more fully when her husband again entered on public life, and the most extended circle had access to their hospitable house. There she appeared always as the reigning spirit, while he, whose sphere was more the public and universal interest, followed his own inclinations and purposes in social life. This was an important part she had to play, for she thereby also smoothed the path on which her husband laboured. In Jena, already, and to a greater extent subsequently in Paris, Rome, Vienna, Berlin, and Tegel, the house of Humboldt was universally known as the centre of intellectual and social life, as the "*point de ralliement*," as she herself calls it, for natives and foreigners. Her house was open to every man of mind and talent, even without a recommendation. If Madame de Staël and Madame de Recamier are named as those who, in the most social country in Europe, were the point of union for the intellectual life in modern times, we may mention as their equals, among German ladies, Madame von Humboldt and Rahel Levin, who, in the absence of qualities which made a Staël shine, have other advantages which perhaps only German women of such eminence possess. Varnhagen von Ense says, in his "Gallery of Pictures," "The amiability of mind and character, the high degree of social cheerfulness, and the great and noble activity which distinguished this charming woman during a highly-fortunate life, are still too fresh and too highly cherished in the memory of all who knew her to make any mention of it necessary." It would certainly have been a great acquisition for us, if the varied life of Madame von Humboldt had been recorded in letters such as those of Rahel. Such a memento would have cast a still brighter light on Humboldt's character, and might have enabled us to give to those recollections of William von Humboldt more biographical completeness; but we hope they will nevertheless be considered as characteristic of his life and tendencies, and enable the reader to form an estimate of one of Germany's greatest men in modern days.

## CHAPTER III.

THE first period of his happy matrimonial existence, Humboldt spent on the beautiful estate of Burgörner, which, with the adjoining spot, Siersleben, had been the property of Caroline von Humboldt's mother. It is situated in the duchy of Mansfeldt, halfway between Ascherelsben and Eisleben.

Humboldt's first care was to renew his interrupted intercourse with his old friends, and he stated to most of them the reasons which had induced him to retire from all public life. We give an extract from one of his letters, as it will give the best description of his life at this period. It is to G. Forster, and is dated the 16th August. After apologizing for his long silence, he says :

"I have now absolved myself from all business, left Berlin, married, and live, in the country, an independent, freely chosen, infinitely happy life. I feel this doubly in telling it you, for I know your warm affectionate heart, and your tender sympathy. I do not fear from you such disapprobation of my step as I met with from many others. You esteem liberty and independent activity too highly to expect much utility from a man only dependent on his official position, and I hope you know that I should never choose any other than one in which I can expect to cultivate my own attainments and character. Indeed, dear friend, the impossibility of doing this was the principal persuasive which told me to choose another course. The axiom that nothing on earth is so important as the highest power, and most varied cultivation of the individual, and that, therefore, the

primary law of true morality is, *educate yourself*, and only the second, *influence others by what you are*; these axioms are so firmly impressed upon my mind that nothing can change them. And how, cherishing such opinions, could I tolerate a position in which I could scarcely hope slowly to approach the ideal which filled my mind and heart? how could even the good I certainly effected, compensate for that which I shall in future be able to effect to a much higher degree? I, therefore, preferred the most modest destiny, a quiet domestic life, and a smaller sphere of action. In it I can live for myself, create a cheerful contented life for those nearest to me, and, perhaps, if my good genius grants me some fortunate hours, add something to the enriching or cultivation of the sphere of ideas to which all action in the world, voluntarily or involuntarily, only tends. Thus much of myself and my situation."

He concludes by recurring to the happy days formerly spent in Forster's society, and thanks him for the improvement his society had always been to him.

Although Humboldt's resolution to abandon a lucrative official position, and live with more exclusiveness for his own intellectual and spiritual culture, be highly praiseworthy, and has led to the happiest results for science and literature by perfecting his great talents, still it required such an entirely independent worldly position as the one in which he was fortunately placed to be enabled to follow the bent of his tendencies in life. The considerable family estates left by his father were only divided between the two brothers. The estate of Ringewalde fell to Alexander's share, who sold it, and undertook his great journey to America with the proceeds. William kept Tegel and the estate of Hadersleben near Magdeburg. By his marriage, his possessions were considerably increased. Madame von Humboldt was heiress of Burgörner and Auleben; the revenue alone amounted to 10,000 thalers (1500*l.*), which was at that time considered a much greater income than it would be at present.

Humboldt's principal study during the first years of his retirement was archæology, and the political speculations in which he sometimes indulged were merely accessory. But few of the results of his studies of this period appeared in print; partly because he did not think of it, and only communicated the most considerable of his works to such of his friends with whom he could enter into improving discussions upon them. Among these the most useful to him in these studies was F. A. Wolf, the great archæologian of Halle, and the friendship cemented by these mutual studies proved an enduring one through life.

But Humboldt met with the most beneficial sympathy in his archæological studies from his highly educated wife, who was capable of following him even here. She joined his studies, read with him in Homer, Pindar, Herodotus, &c., and, when Wolf visited them in their retirement, she joined in their conversations "illustrating the scientific earnestness of the men with the grace of a feminine understanding of ancient art and poetry." The happy couple spent no day without studying Greek, and therefore Humboldt subsequently dedicated to her his published translation of Agamemnon, that ripe fruit of his Hellenistic studies, in memory of those years spent in common in intellectual enjoyment.

In the February of 1792, Humboldt removed to Erfurt to await the confinement of his wife, near his father-in-law, and within reach of better medical assistance. Caroline von Beulwitz spent some time in their house, and took part in the intellectual occupations, which suffered no interruption from the change of residence, as Humboldt, on the contrary, here commenced the translation of some of Pindar's odes, some of which were subsequently published.

In the middle of May, 1792, Humboldt was gratified by the birth of his first child, a girl, which was called Caroline, after her mother. On this occasion he wrote to Forster (June 1):—"My little girl is a lovely little creature, larger and stronger than so young a child generally is, full of life and merriment, and has very

large blue eyes, which constantly turn from side to side. My wife nurses the child herself; I, in my total freedom from business, am constantly with her, and so the child is scarcely ever in other hands than ours. Only you, my dear friend, whose heart is so open to these joys, and who know me more intimately, can feel with me how delightful these occupations are, and what a rich profusion of new joys is granted me in my already enviable position." The rest of the letter treats of a political work, which he had undertaken at the request of Dalberg, and which he sent to Forster for his opinion and judgment, before giving it to the public through the medium of the press. This is the last letter from Humboldt to Forster which has reached us, and we may presume that few more were written. The French entered Mayence on the 21st October, and Forster, in his enthusiasm for the French revolution and for freedom, was sent to Paris, by his fellow-citizens, who wished to be incorporated with France. While there, Mayence was again taken by the allied army, and Forster was obliged to remain in Paris, a witness of the Reign of Terror, and died there, of want and grief, in 1794. His widow married the author Huber.

Humboldt and his family left Erfurt in the summer of 1792, and went to reside on their beautiful estate of Auleben, on the banks of the golden Aue, where they remained till the spring of 1793, continuing their studies in retirement and happiness.

The political work, after Schiller had, with some difficulty, found a publisher willing to take it, was however not published, as Humboldt wished to modify and remodel it entirely; it was, indeed, never published as an entire work, probably because Humboldt never felt the inclination to re-write it.

Before the end of the winter, 1793, Humboldt again visited Erfurt. The following spring brought him another child—a son, to whom he gave his own name, and who, during his short life, was the father's favourite.

In the summer, he went to Berlin for the first time with his wife ; but the political and social circumstances there were still not of a nature to induce him to remain, and he left it after a short visit. After several years spent in retirement, he now felt the want of communicating and exchanging his ideas, and, to satisfy this desire, he and his family removed to Jena in the spring of 1794, in order to live in the immediate vicinity of the great poet Schiller.

We will now enumerate the works of William von Humboldt, published from 1791 to 1794, beginning with those on political philosophy. The first of these, is "Ideas on Constitutions, suggested by the new French constitution." This was contained in a letter to a friend, in August, 1791, and was published in the "Berlin Monthly Journal," edited by Biester. The second, "Ideas for an attempt to determine the boundaries of the State," in which this question is investigated from all points, especially in reference to home policy. It was only published in fragments, and the most important of these is superscribed, "How far may the care of the State for the welfare of its subjects be carried?" But, even this chapter is not perfect, as only the most important portions were printed. Besides this, three smaller chapters were published: the fifth, "On the care of the State for protection against foreign enemies;" the sixth: "On Public, National Education;" and the eighth: "On the improvement of Morality by National Institutions." The first-mentioned work was published anonymously; the fragments bore the name of the author.

In these essays it appears plainly how profoundly Humboldt understood the disadvantages of modern civilization, and in what way he suggested their removal. The study which he considered as best adapted to form a highly cultivated nation, was that of antiquity, and especially of the Greeks. Humboldt took a lively interest in old, even uncivilized nations, especially of the southern ones, because they have a bolder natural life than the more modern northern



nations. He therefore tarried with particular interest among Italians and Spaniards, and he spent some years in investigations of the traditions of the Basque nations. When he had planned his first visit to Italy, he anticipated greatly extending his knowledge of the human races there. He wrote to Schiller on this subject, 12th of October, 1795: "As far I know the nation now, it must reveal much original natural humanity, besides all its civilization, although, perhaps, not in a very high degree, as the sensual faculties seem to be principally developed. It must be more formless than any other nation, and therefore particularly adapted to reveal certain interesting features of human nature; and in this I imagine it resembles the ancients, and is, so to speak, their shadow." Rome itself seemed to him the embodied conception of that past which so mightily occupied him; and he considered that city best adapted for the study of the history of the civilization of the human race. He expresses himself more forcibly on this point in his review of Goethe's Italian journey, which he wrote in 1839. The modern civilization, he says, had to raise itself on the spirit of antiquity, in order to combine itself into a complete whole, and especially on the spirit of the Greeks. It can on the whole be said of Humboldt, who lived more in the sphere of ideas, that he never entered exclusively into the consideration of the present and nearest, but always kept in view, at the same time, how these circumstances would be if our existence were inspired by the strength of the ancients—if the current which carries events forward had arrived already at that issue to which we look back with eternal longing.

When he had retired from the official position he had entered upon, he at once devoted himself zealously to the studies which he had chosen for the attainment of his object. Thus years passed on, which he devoted almost exclusively to the Greek world. But before these years were passed, he had attained to a far more profound comprehension of antiquity than

even the greatest philologists of the day could boast of, and we can therefore not be surprised when we find that the comprehension of antiquity as a whole, which had been only the accidental result of his studies, now partly became the very purpose of these studies. His reasons for this, and his views, are best shown in a letter which he wrote to his friend Wolf, in 1792. "It is probable," he says, "that I shall have the wisdom not to change my present condition, and in that case, antiquity, especially Greek antiquity, will form my exclusive occupation. I cannot study as a philologist *du métier*, my education prevents that; for if I were now to endeavour with all my power, and with all the resources at my command, to acquire accurate knowledge, even of grammatical details, I should never—beginning so late—advance far enough. It seems to me, however, that my individuality has led me to a less common view of the study of the ancients. I find it difficult to explain my meaning briefly, but the sum of it is about this. There is, besides all studies and developments of mankind, a peculiar one, which, so to say, braces together the whole man, and makes him not only more capable, better, and stronger in one or the other point, but makes of him a greater and nobler man; and this requires, at the same time, strength of the intellectual, goodness of the moral, and sensibility and susceptibility of the æsthetic faculties. This kind of education has gradually fallen into disuse, while it prevailed to a high degree among the Greeks. Now I think it cannot be revived better than by the study of great, and in this respect, admirable men, in a word, by the study of the Greeks. No other nation possesses such simplicity and nature, with such a high degree of civilization; and none combined so much persevering energy, with susceptibility for every impression. The study of the Greeks, in this respect, and the description of their political, religious and domestic situations, in its strictest fidelity, will occupy me until my attention be forcibly directed to something else, or until I shall have perfectly fathomed

my subject, for which, according to my requirements, a life would scarcely suffice." Although Humboldt speaks so modestly, in the commencement of this letter, of his philological knowledge, we may justly assume that he had advanced very far in this branch before this time; for it cannot be supposed that he who had attained to such eminence in the field of languages, should not have very early mastered the Greek tongue. Indeed, we shall soon see that the philosophy of language began to occupy his attention already at this period. We can, indeed, see in the words quoted above, nothing but the honourable modesty which would not permit him to address Wolf, on his exclusive field, as an equal. In a letter to Schiller, written about the same period, he does not conceal that he feels himself sufficiently master of the Greek language to translate the most difficult Greek poet, who has hitherto been mastered by no one, in the rhythm of the original. It is, however, natural, that Humboldt should never have considered actual philological knowledge as his chief purpose, although he considered that nothing in science could be trifling or unimportant. This he says, in a critical essay on Wolf's translation of the "Odyssey," in the following words:—

"It is difficult to say what a trifle means. For him who is accustomed to study any branch of science in a philosophic spirit, no portion of it has a particular importance, but each has its value by its relation to the whole. By an exact view of the whole, not by casual suppression of the apparently unimportant, does a clever, spirited treatment of any subject differ from a pedantic one. In science, also, everything is interconnected, and if the critic has to study the language to its full extent, it is difficult to understand why he should neglect accentuation and orthography, or only study it to a certain arbitrary extent." Thus Humboldt entered into all studies, and pursued each one which he found requisite for his purpose, as if it were, for the time, the chief purpose and task of his life.

In the beginning of 1793 he sent Wolf from Aulben an essay on the study of the ancients, and especially of the Greeks, in which he recommends their study to every individual by all possible arguments. This essay was dedicated to Wolf, although it was also submitted for perusal and criticism to Schiller and Dalberg; but we nowhere find it printed, and a few fragments only have been collected, which have enabled us to gather the spirit of the work. He gives a sketch of the gradual stages of Greek culture, its peculiar characteristics, and his reasons for recommending it as the best civilizer of the present age, and, in conclusion, advises the learner not to devote himself exclusively to the period of the highest Greek civilization, but on the contrary to dwell more on the earlier periods, for in them, he says, are contained the germs of the really fine character of the Greeks, and it is more instructive to watch how it was gradually modified, and finally corrupted.

It was at this period Humboldt's intention to produce "a description of the Greek character illustrated with detailed historical proofs," but he soon gave up the plan on account of the great extent of the work; the materials he had collected for the purpose, loom, however, through all his other works, and make us regret the non-fulfilment of the great plan.

- Among the Greek poets, Pindar and Eschylus occupied his attention principally, and he has translated several of the works of the former. There is no surer way of penetrating the spirit or the language of a nation than by a constantly continued attempt to reproduce its authors, and especially its poets, with the utmost possible fidelity in the mother tongue. Humboldt devoted much time to this occupation, and succeeded in his efforts better than any known Greek translator. His translations from the Greek are the only ones in German which combine fidelity in form and matter with clearness and ease of expression. It had once been his wish to translate the whole of Pindar, but in 1795 he gave up all hopes of the realization

of this plan. He continued to his latest years, however, in producing fragments of the finest and most characteristic works. Fifteen are included in the second volume of his collected works, and several of these must have been written, or at least commenced, between 1792 and 1795. Humboldt is acknowledged to be one of the best translators, and his works on this field of literature, especially his "Agamemnon," rank with those of the first. If they occasionally seem heavy, or un-German, the fault lies more in the rigidity of his principles in respect to metre and rhythm, and in the extreme difficulty of the works he had selected.

He was, however, not exclusively employed in studying the character of Greek art, but also that of modern, especially of German poetry. The more the ancient poets cultivated his æsthetical perceptions, the less did he overlook the great works of his fellow-countrymen. And now, at the time when he had been so strengthened by his studies, fate introduced him to those poets who, on the point of approaching the ideal of art in emulation of the ancients, and of perfecting their natural capabilities by theoretical criticism, could scarcely work without a fellow-labourer who had thoroughly mastered the knowledge of the ancients, and whose judgment was not warped by modern prejudices. How often Humboldt regretted a modern or superficial comprehension of the Greeks in other cotemporaries—in Herder, Woltmann, even in Schlegel! Schiller and Goethe needed a mind who possessed as much knowledge of that former world as sympathy for modern art, as much independent knowledge as interest in the labours of others. As Lessing was dead, none could have sufficed but Humboldt. He alone could fully enter into the plans of these great men, and assist them by criticism and speculation. By the friendship of these three, the modern philosophy of art was founded, partly by a more profound study of the nature of the human imagination, but principally by comparative criticism of ancient and modern poetry.

It was principally in order to live in the same town with Schiller, that Humboldt, with his family, removed to Jena, in the spring of 1794. Schiller did not arrive in Jena till some weeks later, having paid a visit of some months to his native province. But it was not only Schiller's society which he found in Jena, for it was also at that time the permanent and occasional residence of several other eminent men. Those belonging to the philosophical school were, of course, most congenial to Humboldt, and they belonged all to the Kantian school, or followed in its steps. Most eminent among them stands Fichte; besides him, Niethammer taught there, also councillor Schütz, the philologist, and the doctor of law, Hufeland,—all Kantists. But there were other illustrious men also here. The historian Woltmann, who endeavoured to shine in the most varied branches; the philologist and archæologist, Ilgen,—the theologians, Paulus and Griesbach,—not forgetting the naturalists and medical men with whom Humboldt came in contact, partly by his own studies, partly through the medium of his brother and Goethe; among them Batsch, Loder, and others. Stark and Hufeland, the eminent physicians, had, as such, access to Humboldt's house: so that from the driest branches of sciences, to the most cheerful enjoyments of art, all degrees were represented in Jena, and were received by Humboldt in his hospitable house. The universal and versatile mind of a Humboldt could take part in all; he sought to instruct himself in all branches; and while he, a man of six-and-twenty, associated with the pillars of science, and was on terms of equality with the oldest and most advanced, he was youthful enough to enter into cheerful and confidential conversation with the humblest of the youths who thronged in masses from all parts of Germany to the celebrated seat of the Muses, if he found in them mind or talent.

The admiration for Eschylus made Humboldt intimate with Schütz, who was editing the works of that Greek author, which Humboldt attempted to trans-

late. He also contributed to the "*Allgemeine Literatur Zeitung*" of Jena, which was at that time the first critical paper in Germany. The young Woltmann, too, was talented enough to interest Humboldt, but he treated him always with a certain irony, and did not regard him as perfect in any of the numerous branches in which he pretended to excel. It was soon discovered that he was, in history, an imitator of Schiller, though by no means an unskilful one. As an æsthetician, Humboldt considers him weak; as a critic, insufficient, affected, and poor in ideas; as a poet, intolerable; and in his chair as lecturer on the sources of history, he spoke of the ancients with modern self-sufficiency.

Humboldt's acquaintance with Fichte and Niehammer was more satisfactory, and they invited Humboldt to contribute to their philosophical journal, though it does not appear that he did so. Both Schiller and Humboldt seem to have cultivated Fichte's acquaintance, although Humboldt seems to have had more respect for the great thinker, and to have been on better terms with him than Schiller. It would seem, from all contemporary testimony, that Fichte, this noble and great man, was extremely quarrelsome and obstinate, and self-willed to eccentricity.

A more intimate friendship seems to have subsisted between Humboldt and Ilgen, the subsequently celebrated rector of Schulpforte. With him he conversed on languages and antiquity, and on the philosophy of language. Ilgen was also an agreeable companion, and liked to see his friends in his house; from his wife we know something of the exterior appearance of the great minds of that day. The outward elegance of these great men was, with the exception of Woltmann and Goethe, very questionable. Humboldt was, however, very careful of his dress, and whenever the men, after dinner, left the room to take coffee and to smoke, he retired to change his coat, because he wished to save his dress-coat from Ilgen's

smoke, for Humboldt hated smoking. The dress-coat itself was very simple, but he returned to the clouds of smoke in a coat which "a respectable barber of the present day would despise." This is characteristic of a period in which so much intellectual food was afforded and enjoyed, that other matters were of no moment, and the mental worth weighed more than the exterior appearance.

Schiller returned to Jena in May, 1794, and henceforward the most intimate friendship connected the two families through life, especially as the two ladies found in each other old and dear friends. Humboldt had taken a house on the market-place, immediately opposite Schiller's house. "We met twice daily," he says, "were principally alone in the evening, and generally together till late at night." They spent these hours in philosophical and æsthetical conversations, of whose extent and importance we can now form some idea from the correspondence of the two men. By these conversations Schiller formed himself for his intimacy with Goethe, which was soon afterwards to commence.

What a loss for society that an Eckermann was not present, who could have reported these conversations to us! How the little we know of it makes us long for a more detailed account! A friend of Humboldt's, William von Burgsdorf, wrote to Rabel from Jena at this time: "Humboldt goes to Schiller's regularly every evening from eight until after ten o'clock. The second evening of my stay here I went with him, and always since then. I am delighted to see Schiller thus. He lives only in his ideas, in constant mental activity; thinking and poetising is his only want, and he esteems everything else only in so far as it conduces to this, his real life. Humboldt, therefore, is very much to him: he considers these hours as his hours of recreation, but only in his own way. I speak little, but not too little, and if the conversation becomes too abstract for me I play with the bricks; in short, everything here has fortunately an entirely



domestic aspect. Humboldt is entirely at home, and more amiable than ever. With Schiller he is quite unconstrained, and sometimes as witty and comical as we have ever seen him. You may think, also, how interesting it is, when, instead of cutting short and trivializing everything, he has always the desire to express himself; when he, instead of combating his opponent in something not to the point, always keeps to the subject, when he esteems truth itself as much in words as in thought; I mean, when he does not too soon break off his opinions, or maintain them too long, from contempt for the opinions of the other."

Very soon afterwards Goethe joined the friendly union subsisting between Humboldt and Schiller. The inducement and occasion was the origination of a journal, "*Die Horen*," an undertaking which Schiller had projected with the young publisher, Cotta, in Tübingen, and which was carried into execution in Jena.

"*Die Horen*" were to enlist the co-operation of the principal writers and thinkers of Germany, and by an uninterrupted series of valuable contributions from them in prose and verse, were to form a never-before seen testimony of the literary advancement of the age, and the means for its further development. Schiller was well qualified for directing such an undertaking, but the time was not appropriate, the public too apathetic, and the real members, and their regular contributions, too few, to support the journal for more than a few years. Besides, only the numbers issued in the first, and part of the second year, fulfil the high promise of its commencement.

Humboldt's interest in this journal was a very considerable one, and Schiller valued him as one of his most able coadjutors. In his application to Goethe to join their undertaking, dated 13th June, 1794, he speaks in the name of those already associated, and says that in Jena, Humboldt, Fichte, and Woltmann had undertaken to superintend the publication of the

journal, and that it was their wish that Goethe should join this select association, of which one or two were always to read over and judge the contributions sent in. Goethe willingly accepted the invitation; and the first few numbers of the paper contained, besides two long essays by Humboldt, contributions from the editor—Schiller, Goethe, Herder, Fichte, A. W. Schlegel, Engel, and Professor Meyer.

Goethe came to Jena soon after this, in consequence of his association with the journal, and then the basis of that friendship between the two poets was laid, in which Humboldt participated to so eminent a degree, and which is an honour to German literature.

After Goethe's departure from Jena, from whence his correspondence with Schiller dates, we find in every letter "Remember me kindly to Humboldt and the ladies;" and when, a few months later, he invited Schiller to visit him in Weimar, he requested Humboldt to accompany his friend, which he did, although only for a few hours. No other stood in such near relation to the two German poets; and a correspondence between Humboldt and Goethe was soon afterwards commenced, which was carried on for nearly forty years; as it has, however, not yet been published, we possess only the indications of it which, from time to time, appear in Humboldt's letters to Schiller.

Goethe now visited his Jena friends from time to time, and Humboldt returned his visits to Weimar. In November, Humboldt accompanied his brother Alexander, who had been in Jena and was going to Frankfort, as far as Weimar; and Goethe writes to Schiller—"Humboldt arrived to join an æsthetic-critical session; I do not know how it entertained him:" and Schiller replies—"Humboldt, who would be warmly commended to you, is still full of the impression which your method of reading Homer has made upon him; and he has excited in us all such a desire for it, that when you come again for a few days, we shall not rest until you hold such a session

with us." In January, Goethe visits Jena again, and writes in March—"I hope Herr von Humboldt has been industrious, and also anticipate conversing with him again soon on *anatomica*. I have put aside some very natural but very interesting chemical preparations for him. Remember me most kindly to him and the ladies." Goethe spent nearly the whole of April in Jena; and in May he was agreeably surprised, in Weimar, by a visit from Humboldt. In June he visits Jena again, and Humboldt accompanies him to Weimar.

Goethe sent his contributions to the "Horen" in MS. to Schiller and Humboldt, and requested them to read them over once more, and correct them; he had made them as complete as his time permitted. He also sent the MS. of "Wilhelm Meister," on which he was at this time employed, to Schiller, with the request to mark what he did not approve of; and adds—"I recommend my hero and his companions also to the consideration of Herr von Humboldt and the ladies." The friends were delighted; Schiller made a few marginal notes, and the more important objection—when Wilhelm receives the present of money from the countess, through the baron—that he, as well as Humboldt, considered, with such a tender relation as the one existing between the parties, such a present, and through a third person, could neither be offered nor accepted; and suggested a modification. Goethe replied, that he hoped to be able to change this objectionable incident, and to follow the other suggestions of the friends. Humboldt read the conclusion when he returned to Berlin, and writes—"The fifth book is highly interesting, and entirely in the spirit of its predecessors. But the difficulty with the person in whose arms Wilhelm felt himself is more seen through than, I think, was permissible. Meister's falling asleep is also not natural."

The most interesting discussion on this subject took place when the conclusion of the "apprenticeship" appeared, as both Schiller and Körner took part in

it. The latter commenced it by a letter to Schiller, exclusively devoted to this subject, in which he pronounced himself unconditionally in favour of the principal character in the book. Humboldt opposed him on this point, without, therefore, thinking less favourably of the work itself. Körner's letter had been shown to him and he sent his opinion direct to Goethe, who forwarded it to Schiller, with the remark: "It is consolatory to have such sympathizing friends and neighbours. From my own immediate circle nothing like this has come." We see by this correspondence what a great influence our Humboldt has exercised on the works of the two greatest of modern poets, and that without having produced such works himself he has been very instrumental in their production.

Of Humboldt's works written during this period, we may name his review of Jacobi's "*Waldemar*," which appeared in the "*Allgemeine Literatur Zeitung*" (1794, Nos. 315 and 317), and is now included in his collected works. This very profound essay treats of the most interesting problems of psychology and ethics, and has great value independent of the too-favourably criticised work. The philosophical portion of the review is much more important than the esthetic part; but this is natural, as the value of the work lies far more in its matter than in its form, and it was the friendly purpose of the critic to dwell principally on the former. Rabel Levin writes of the review, in a letter to a friend, that it had been decried as too difficult, but that she had found it very intelligible, and admired it exceedingly. "It is much more talented than '*Waldemar*' itself, as it contains everything the book should have contained, while Jacobi does not give what he should give; he describes only the form of a system, not characters who embodied it—not a living natural specimen." The work, she says, seems to her as the sketch for a criticism, and she is disgusted by the naturalness and stiffness of Jacobi's characters. Humboldt, she continues, should have reviewed *He-loise*, *Werther*, or *Tasso*, and then one would have

had the pleasure of admiring two geniuses at the same time, and see one genius admire the other. Humboldt's own ideas she thinks excellent, and cannot understand some persons' opinions of him. "You always considered Humboldt an extraordinary philosopher, and praised and exalted him, but denied his knowledge of character. Has he then never spoken with you as he has written in this review? Or have you entirely misunderstood him? Else you must have bowed deeply before his knowledge of character."

Other less favourable reviews of "Waldemar" appeared in other journals, soon after the publication of Humboldt's criticism; so that it would seem that he was led by his friendship for Jacobi to judge his work too favourably.

Besides this review, two essays, which he wrote for the *Horen*, are remarkable. I. "On the difference of Sex, and its influence on Organic Nature," and II. "On Masculine and Feminine Form." They were written during the time of his most intimate communion with Schiller, but are entirely his own, and a kind of centre of his ideal world. For, although he may have discussed these subjects with Schiller, and modified or enlarged his ideas by communication, it could easily be proved from their correspondence that Humboldt persuaded and encouraged Schiller to turn his genius to the consideration of these subjects. Schiller also never entered so earnestly or deeply into the subject as Humboldt did; he treats the subject only in some lyric, lyric-didactic and epigrammatic poems, i.e. "Würde der Frauen," "Die Geschlechter," "Tugend des Weibes," "Die Schonste Erscheinung," "Forum des Weibes," "Weibliches Urtheil," "Das Weibliche Ideal," which all appeared in 1795 and 1796, during the period of, or immediately following, his intercourse with Humboldt, who descends into the depths of his subject, and draws the pure ore from the rich mine of his thought. Any attempt at a description of the chain of ideas developed by Humboldt in these essays would lead us beyond our limits, and

would still give but a very poor idea of the profundity of knowledge displayed in them. They are among the most interesting works which Humboldt has written, for he appears here as an entirely original thinker. Both his subject and its treatment are peculiar and novel, and have formed the basis of subsequent investigations by other philosophers.

The second treatise was quoted soon after its publication by Franz Schlegel with great commendation. Jacobi wrote to the author to express his commendation of the first. The introduction only he considered, and perhaps not without reason, as too abstract, and thought that the quantity of great and glorious ideas in which the essay abounds, might have been so put that the subject should flow more from them than they from the subject. Humboldt himself had little hope of disseminating his ideas, and felt this more powerfully when he read Schiller's poem "*Würde der Frauen*." He writes to him 11th September, 1795: "It was indeed an indescribable feeling to find things on which I have thought so much, which are perhaps more than you may have remarked, interwoven with my whole existence, expressed in such an appropriate diction. What we think and write down in prose is, after all, only words, something dead and powerless, and especially something indistinct and imperfect. It only receives completion, life, and a peculiar organization from the pen of the poet, and I have never felt this so vividly as now." Schiller replies to this, 5th Oct.: "Do not doubt, my dear friend, that your ideas on sex will eventually become current, and will be stamped as scientific coin, as soon as you will publish a still more detailed work on the subject. This is certainly necessary, and I think the matter deserves it. I am now only waiting for some public voice of approbation of my poem, and for a suitable opportunity to state publicly how much is contained in your essays." A very important opinion on these essays, and especially on the one treating of masculine and feminine form, has lately been published by Francis von Müller: "When

Humboldt wrote these essays he had not seen Italy, and consequently knew the classic statues only through copies, some of the most charming of them not at all. It is therefore the more remarkable, and to be admired, with what an unerring and penetrating judgment he seizes the forms of the classic gods and heroes, and brings them before our mental eye, and the happy aptness of his nature to comprehend the original types of the beautiful with clearness and purity, to conceive and examine them in their most profound peculiarity is undeniable and admirable." Simultaneously with these essays Schiller's letters on the Esthetical Education of Man appeared in the "Horen." The intimate relation of the chain of ideas in the two authors is nowhere more decidedly apparent. They seem almost to struggle for the palm in brilliancy of diction, in the poetically attractive garment they both throw round the most abstractly philosophic ideas. Humboldt's power of language can scarcely be more gracefully displayed, a difficult subject could not have been more perfectly mastered, nor abstract dryness been more happily avoided than in this essay. We would even, if it were not presumptuous, award to it the palm, in consideration of its clearness and intelligibility, in preference to the letters, in which the ideas are rather too finely and dialectically drawn out.

Humboldt also published an announcement of the small edition of the *Odyssey*, by F. A. Wolf, for the *Allgemeine Literatur Zeitung*. It was a public acknowledgment of the merits of Wolf, as regards his restoration of the Homeric text. We have already quoted the passage in which he speaks of the importance of the most trifling points in science, and which occurs in this essay.

Alexander von Humboldt visited his brother several times during William's residence in Jena, and during his stay, galvanic and anatomic studies, in which William participated, and Goethe was equally interested, were the order of the day. In 1795, Alex-

ander made a journey across the Alps to Italy, from which he did not return until the following year.

Humboldt's intimacy with Schiller naturally brought him into closer connexion with those who enjoyed Schiller's friendship, or visited him in Jena. The principal of these was Körner of Dresden, with whom he entered into a warm correspondence. In 1794, a young fellow countryman of Schiller's, Frederick Hölderlin, also came to Jena, and was very kindly received and supported by Humboldt. He was a highly poetical spirit, but died too soon, after a most unfortunate career.

Humboldt, with his family, left Jena, in June, 1795, with the intention of returning in October, after a short visit to Tegel, but they found his mother so ill that they remained near her the whole winter, and did not return to Jena till the autumn of the following year. This long separation was equally painful to Humboldt and to his poet-friends. Schiller writes to Goethe, 2nd October, 1795, "Humboldt is not returning this year, which is very unpleasant for me," and to Humboldt he writes: "Goethe laments your long absence very much. Even on account of anatomy he wished for your presence." But Humboldt felt the long separation from Schiller most acutely, especially whenever he was uneasy about Schiller's health, as he then thought how welcome his presence and conversation would be to the invalid. He even suggested to Schiller to remove to Weimar, as he would then, at least, have Goethe near him. In every letter, Humboldt expresses his longing for Schiller's society, and writes to him 4th August, 1795, "I have become so accustomed to social thinking, that if my absence lasts long, I shall fear for my stock of ideas. I take refuge, however, in memory, and, mentally, I spend the best part of my time with you."

In Tegel, he led a very retired life, which was frequently disturbed by sickness in his family. His own health had not been so robust in Jena as formerly,



and he suffered from an eye disease, which sometimes even made reading a difficulty. He rarely received visits, and sometimes did not go to Berlin for six weeks. Many obstacles prevented his producing anything for publication at this period, and principally his ceaseless study. But the most important part of his correspondence with Schiller, took place at this time, and, as it has been published, the world has been a great gainer by the temporary separation of the two eminent friends. In their correspondence, we see the greatest works of Schiller planned, discussed, corrected, and gradually brought to completion, the ideas and sentiments contained in them are debated and suggested, and, now and then, Goethe also sends manuscripts and plans of works to Humboldt, that he may peruse and correct them. This correspondence enables the reader better to comprehend all the works of the German poet, as their beauties and defects are discussed and pointed out with penetrating criticism, in the unguarded outpourings of an affectionate correspondence.

For himself, Humboldt made more plans and projects at this period than he realized; he seemed to live only for Schiller, as the adviser and corrector of his genius. But even his plans are interesting, and we will therefore briefly sketch them. He purposed to make Voss's "Louisa," the subject of a critical essay, and intended to confine himself strictly to the idyllic portion of the work, to glance at the idyllic poets of other nations, and take the opportunity of elucidating his favourite theory of the similarity of the Greeks and Germans. Another project was the criticism of Goethe's "Reinecke, the Fox," of which only some very original ideas on the Fox have reached us in letters to Schiller. Schiller requested him to write an explanation of his "Reich der Schatten," but although Humboldt would have liked the task, he thought it unsuitable in him to constitute himself a commentator on Schiller.

The plans and works relating to antiquity were

more perseveringly pursued, although his translation of "Aristophanes" remained very fragmentary. But he laboured seriously at the plan of giving a comprehensive picture of the Greek poetical spirit, with a few characteristic features and some prominent examples in a special essay. He had read nearly all the great poets more than once, and with great care. But not wishing to aim at too much, he was to commence only with the poetic spirit of the Greeks, with their descriptive power, and in future essays treat them in a more universal spirit. But of this little could have been achieved, and nothing was published. The only works which were printed were the translation of Pindar's Fourth Pythian Ode, with introduction and notes, and a review of Schiller's "Almanac of the Muses, for 1796." What a glorious time for literature that was when Schiller edited an almanac, Goethe was the greatest contributor, and William von Humboldt the critic!

CHAPTER IV.

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As Humboldt intended soon to leave Germany for a journey to Italy, he made a short trip into the north of Germany in the course of this summer (1796), and visited Voss in Entin, and Klopstock in Hamburg, who were both much pleased and flattered by his visit. On his return from this trip he went once more to Jena, in November, 1796, and remained there till the following April. The time was spent as before, in almost constant intercourse with Schiller, in literary activity on both sides, with frequent visits from Goethe, who came to read his unfinished production to his critical friends, and receive their judgment and praise.

In November, Humboldt received the account of his mother's death, which afflicted him much, though it was not unexpected ; and at the beginning of the year, Alexander came to visit him and spend some time with his family, which had been increased by a little boy, who received the name of Theodor. Alexander was full of plans for his great West Indian journey, and with this object in view he cultivated his knowledge of practical anatomy, spending from six to seven hours daily in the anatomical lecture room.

William, during this winter, commenced his translation of the "Agamemnon" of Eschylus, and after he had submitted it to his friends and received their judgments, he writes to F. A. Wolf, with unaffected modesty :—"Having shown my translation to some here, I find myself in a very peculiar position. Schiller is not quite pleased with it. He does not deny that

the translation has energy and poetical feeling, but he considers it too harsh, heavy, and indistinct. It wants a more common structure, more clearness, and perhaps a less faithful metre.

"You seem to condemn my work equally, but just from contrary reasons, though it might be possible that your complaint of want of the true spirit of Eschylus is identical with Schiller's objection of want of clearness.

"Franz Schlegel made the same objections that you make when I read the manuscript to him in an earlier copy than the one you have. I altered many things, and at the second reading he seemed more content. Whether he was quite satisfied, I do not know. He is, as you know, rather laconic in these matters.

"Goethe is very well satisfied with the work, as I gather from remarks made to myself and others, and from his constant interest in the progress of the work. He wants me not only to finish the "Agamemnon," but to follow it up with appropriately chosen pieces by Sophocles, Euripides, and Aristophanes. They all seem not particularly to esteem the versification, which is the most difficult and, in my opinion, the most meritorious portion of the work. With Schiller, it is from want of the requisite knowledge of Greek. You have given no opinion on this point. Goethe seems to feel and to approve of it, but he wants the knowledge for criticising it. Franz Schlegel is the only one who has entered into the subject, and he is, with a few exceptions, satisfied.

"Thus far my report. The position I take up in face of these criticisms is this. In the first place I always consider blame more justified than praise. Goethe's praise is, for many reasons, not satisfactory. He finds my translation of great use in reading the original, and is grateful. Of the adverse judgments, Schiller's seems to me the least important; it only proves that I cannot count on a very extensive circle of readers, and I knew that before. Only your con-

demnation has grieved me, and I confess frankly to you that I have not written a verse for four days, nor looked at my work. . . . . My courage has now, however, been revived, and I find myself in the true position which I may follow. . . . . It is my firm intention to collect as severe criticisms as possible, before my work is completed, without, however, giving up my independent judgment. I have no want of industry and perseverance, but when I perceive the impossibility of doing more, I shall declare it to be finished. For what else can I do? This work occupies me much, and I have never felt such interest in any."

He wrought a long time at the alterations of the work before he declared it to be finished.

At this period Humboldt left Jena and his poet-friends. Schiller parted with him more easily now than he would at any other time have done, as his intimacy with Goethe was now at its height, and he therefore missed his friend less. But for Humboldt the separation must have been more painful, for he had in the previous August, when speaking of his journey, declared that he could nowhere, wherever he might live, find a compensation for this friendship; he subsequently writes, that he knows not how much he would give if his friend could accompany him; and after Schiller's untimely death, he wrote to Wolf that he had spent his most intellectually fruitful years in intercourse with Schiller.

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From Jena, which Humboldt, with his family, left the end of April, 1797, they proceeded to Halle, where William remained some days, that he might settle many disputed questions concerning his "Agamemnon," in personal conversation with Wolf, and then hastened to Berlin, where, after the death of his mother, he had to arrange his affairs, with a view to a lengthened absence. Alexander met him there, and in order to be able to defray the expenses of the great journey he had planned, sold the estate of Ringewalde,

which was his share of the parental inheritance, to the poet Franz von Kleist. Both brothers had the intention of proceeding to Italy over Dresden, Vienna, and the Alps—the younger brother with the view of continuing his journey to Spain, and thence to the new world.

In June, William proceeded, with his whole family, to Dresden, where he remained several weeks, and was joined by his brother Alexander. Here the family affairs were finally arranged, for which purpose Kunth, the former tutor, had also joined the brothers. In Dresden they spent their time agreeably, with the Councillor Körner and the Prussian ambassador; Count von Gessler. They were obliged to remain in Dresden longer than they had anticipated, because Madame von Humboldt was attacked by a fever. From Dresden the entire family proceeded to Vienna, and remained here also longer than they had wished, awaiting the issue of the pending war, which at last forced them to give up for the time their journey to Italy. The Southern Germany had been swept tolerably clean of enemies by the victorious campaign of the Archduke Charles in the preceding year, but the advantages which Bonaparte's genius had achieved in Italy and the Adriatic provinces obliged the Austrians to negotiate. These negotiations lasted a long time, but the fate of Italy was clear, and a journey thither scarcely possible. Goethe, also, could only proceed as far as Switzerland. On the 15th September, Schiller wrote to the latter: "I have to-day received a letter from our friend Humboldt. He no longer likes Vienna, has all but abandoned the plan of the Italian journey, and is nearly determined to proceed to Paris, but the newest events there will have changed this purpose again." Schiller was, however, in error, for these events confirmed the plan of the journey to Paris. Humboldt now determined to approach the French boundary at the foot of the Alps, and there to await the anticipated peace between Austria and France.

On the 30th of October, Schiller writes again to Goethe—"Humboldt has at last written to me from Munich. He is now steering for Basel, where he will decide whether he proceeds to Paris or not. He will therefore scarcely meet you, unless you spend the winter in Zurich, where he will go if he does not go to Paris. He describes a large salt-mine, near Berchthols-gaden, very amusingly. The Bavarian nation seems not to please him, but he praises the Minister of War there, M. Rumford, on account of his very fine and humane establishments."

The peace of Campo Formio was signed on the 17th of October; now France was again open to the German nation, and Humboldt, with his family, at once proceeded thither. After his arrival, and during his stay, his correspondence with Schiller and Goethe continued with the same vivacity as if they were only a few miles distant; and Humboldt seems, during the first period of his Paris life, only to have used the new impressions he received, that he might give a faithful picture of them to the friends he had left. He described the French spirit and French art in his long and interesting letters, with fidelity and vivacity.

Humboldt remained true to his German nature, and to the great interest of German philosophy and art, far more even than his friends expected. While Schiller and Goethe exchanged comments on his descriptive letters, he wrote, in April 1798, his æsthetic essays on Goethe's "*Hermann and Dorothea*"—*i.e.* a theory of poesy, and especially of epic poesy, based on this new masterpiece of the great German poet.

The matter contained in this work had long occupied Humboldt's attention, and his ideas on the subject had been elucidated and perfected by communication with the two poets.

It may appear strange that the enthusiastic admirer of Schiller's poetry should not have chosen one of the works of that poet as the basis on which to develope

his own reflections on art. But the reason seems to be, that the tendency of both poets to approach the ideal of Greek perfection was most plainly shown, and most successfully achieved, in this production of Goethe's. Now, none of the literary men of the day were so partial to this imitation of the Greeks, as Humboldt; and none, therefore, felt such a high degree of critical interest as he did, when he saw this splendid proof of the success of his favourite theory. This selection also plainly proves that he not only deemed epic poetry in general, but this poem of Goethe's in particular, as appropriate for developing the fundamental laws of the beautiful in art. It was, therefore, a fortunate circumstance for him that he was now separated from Schiller, so that the individual characteristics of the latter could not exercise that influence over his judgment which they had hitherto done. He, however, loses no opportunity of doing justice to Schiller in this essay.

Humboldt sent the manuscript of his work to Schiller, with the request to read it over with Goethe, correct it, and prepare it for publication. That Goethe was pleased and flattered by this great testimony to his talents, cannot be doubted; and after reading it, and debating on it, the two poets determined to send it to press as it had left Humboldt's study, without any material corrections.



CHAPTER V.

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WHEN Humboldt determined to devote the next years of his retirement from public affairs to travelling and to longer residences abroad, affairs at home had undergone little change, and those of Europe merely a deceptive one. In Prussia, the weak rule of Frederic William II. was still paramount, and all hopes for improvement were centred in his successor, Frederic William III., who ascended the throne shortly after Humboldt had commenced his journey (16th Nov., 1797). Worse the condition of Germany could scarcely be. The governments and the people were apathetic; no trace of national spirit existed; the political feeling of the nation was annihilated by centuries of miserable tyrants, and a few rays of light existed only in the intellectual progress made in a few German principalities. In this intellectual progress of the German nation in arts and science, Humboldt had, as we have seen, taken an active part, but he could do nothing but turn in disgust from the sphere of political life. For what but shame and defeat could be expected from this divided nation, whose powerless fragments had at their head two monarchies filled with intense hatred of each other. What prospect was there but a fearful revolution, whose issue could in no way be calculated? What could be hoped for but a fundamental renovation, inwardly and outwardly, of the national life, and of Prussia, powerless and corrupt in its isolation?

Would not any man who is independent rather quit for a time a country which has such melancholy prospects, and reserve his services until he may hope to

be useful? And how could a man of such high intellectual attainments as Humboldt spend his leisure better than in seeing the men and manners of different countries, and in increasing his knowledge and experience. Indeed, these wanderings abroad were of great service to Humboldt. In studying the nations of southern Europe, and the remnants of classical antiquity, he expanded his views of the past and of humanity in general. Besides, his innate talent for languages developed itself, not so much by intercourse with the various nations, as by the linguistic treasures in which Paris and Rome abound. And, finally, these years formed the practical man—the statesman who was to become eminent by his knowledge, practice, and skill. We may imagine what a residence in Rome and amid Roman scenery must have been to such a sensitive mind as Humboldt's, even without the unequivocal testimony which we have in his letters.

We saw how his plan of proceeding to Italy with his whole family was frustrated by the warlike events. He therefore went to Paris, and we have shown how he cultivated his interest for German art and science even here, surprising his friends in Weimar and Jena with his compendious contribution to art-philosophy. We must now inquire into the circumstances of his Paris life, and see what men there enjoyed his intimacy.

Humboldt arrived in Paris for the second time in his life in the autumn of 1797. To him who had seen the French nation in its enthusiasm for liberty in the first days of the revolution, the place may, spite of the changes it had undergone, not have had the same attraction at this period of temporary exhaustion, although his interest must have remained the same. But as few communications from him during his second visit to Paris are on record, we can only quote some letters from his wife written to various friends. She writes to her friend Rahel Levin, in Berlin, on the 25th May, 1798:—"Paris is the town in which you ought to reside; which you

would enjoy more than any other, especially if you had some Germans near you. Paris is very beautiful; there is scarcely any town which affords a view equal to the one you enjoy when standing on the Pont Royal with the Pont Neuf on the right, the Pont de la Revolution on the left, the beautiful broad river beneath, on each side the broad quays with a row of splendid buildings, the castle of the Tuileries, the garden and the Champs Elysées in the distance." After describing to her friend her mental condition, her longing to know everything *clearly*, even if it should cost her life, as for him whom nature has so formed no other condition is tolerable; and after adding the confession that she has not arrived at this clearness without deep pain and the greatest loss, but that she is now free and calm and impressible to all humanity, and to the Divine in human nature, having at last arrived at the conviction that love must remain the centre of union, "which alone forms our existence, and which, when every other illusion has passed away, still maintains the harmonic flow of life;"—after such outpourings, she continues, "I must tell you a word of my children. My soul lives in my children, as they feel, and I lead a very domestic life with them. The mornings here last till four o'clock; no one dines before that hour, and thus I can be very much with them. In the evenings I am frequently in company, or in the theatre—frequently also at my tea-table at home, with my small circle of acquaintance. Many Germans are here, and my house is a *point de ralliement* for them; but I see, also, many Frenchmen, and like them. The theatre is very interesting, the comedy excellent. The polish, politeness, and superficiality of the French in their manners and feelings are frankly revealed in their pieces, in the manner in which they are performed. In tragedy this is perhaps more remarkable. I cannot imagine how one can ever feel moved by them; but they are highly interesting, because the performance of the principal actors is a perfect

work of art." A second letter from Madame Humboldt describes her domestic happiness more clearly. "My little ones," she says, "would please you. Li (Caroline) grows very amiable; she is delicate, and has a rare degree of sentimentality, perfectly natural, however, as you may imagine. Her brother William is handsome, much more rough, very naughty, self-willed, and yet exceedingly good-natured. Theodore is the most amiable child I ever saw—he is stout, and almost fat, and yet looks slender; his little face has an expression of merriment, and yet his glance seems to indicate something more profound. His eyes are as if you gaze into the heavens. The white in them is quite blue, and the eyeball brown. His hair is light, and his mouth the prettiest I ever saw in a child. If you could see the boy, he would make a fool of you, as he does of me."

In the spring of 1798, Humboldt enjoyed the pleasure of his brother's society in Paris for some time. He came to Paris with the intention of joining Capt. Baudin's expedition, but when that was abandoned, and other attempts to organize an expedition had failed, he repaired to Spain, where he met with assistance from the court, and started on his first journey from thence.

The house of Humboldt in Paris was the centre of union for all the Germans who in any way merited being guests there. Even if Humboldt devoted himself principally to his studies, and to those men with whom he could maintain an adequate intellectual intercourse, his wife formed an attraction for the most various kinds of talents, and German artists especially were sure of her patronage and attention. The French painter David attracted a considerable number of young artists to Paris, and among the German ones especially the painter Schick, the sculptor Tieck, and others. Among the interesting men at that time staying in Paris we may mention Gustav von Brinkmann, who contributed some clever epigrams to Schiller's "Horen, and Almanack of the Muses,"

and was on the most intimate terms with Madame de Staël, Humboldt, &c.

But among the Germans then residing in Paris few interested Humboldt more than the well-known hermit, the Count von Schlabrendorf, a Prussian, a man of great and comprehensive mind, versed in the modern French circumstances as few others were, and addicted beside to a persevering study of human and rational life, of political considerations, and even of language, and resembling Humboldt in liberality of thought as much as in elocutionary talent. It is, therefore, not surprising that they should have esteemed each other highly. Varnhagen von Ense, who wrote a very clever account of this eccentric man, relates, among other things, how he, being accustomed to speak for hours uninterruptedly in the most beautiful connexion, with the most vivid phantasy and increasing energy, once was so lost in discussion with William von Humboldt that he early one evening accompanied him to the stairs, candle in hand, and he was found the next morning on the same spot still, engaged in earnest debate with him. Humboldt has testified the great interest he took in the Count in a letter written to Varnhagen, after the latter had published the above-mentioned memoir. It is dated 5th March, 1832: "I have read your account of our ever memorable friend with great pleasure. It has most vividly recalled to my mind, the time of my intimacy with him, and it seems to me that you have been very successful in giving so much of his traits of character and mode of action, as might give the public an intelligible idea of him, and that even his more intimate friends will acknowledge the resemblance. You must not be disappointed because your memoir does not give the entire impression, which we might desire, of this dear and venerable departed friend. There are mediocre and great men whose merits and advantages can be counted at once and easily, but Schlabrendorf was not

one of these. He required to be thoroughly known, and more than known, really felt. Whoever was not enchanted with him in the first days of acquaintance, and whoever did not prove at once that he possessed the sense for comprehending him, with such an one every discussion was vain, as I often convinced myself. It is, therefore, not possible that any description could exist which should give his true inner being, one of the most remarkable which has ever existed on earth, combined of a melancholy sweetness and gentleness, and the most indomitable courage." We may be permitted here to insert an anecdote which Schlabrendorf told of his friend. "In Paris," he says, "there lives a count K—n, a very good man, as I think, but weak. Once, when he had just left my room, Humboldt said, K—n is a very good soul, but I would rather be his father than his son. I could not help laughing at the idea; but there is deep thought in it. I called upon Humboldt in joke to name one person among his circle, whose son he would like to be from choice, and whom he would love with pure gratitude." Probably, in 1798, Humboldt would have chosen none but Schiller.

The French world, in which Humboldt now for the second time lived, was full of interest and excitement. A new social life commenced with the political apathy under the Directory, and survived its fall. Manners, laws, and intellectual life were confirmed, and everything began to adopt that physiognomy which characterizes modern France. The representative of this change was a great woman, daughter of the revolutionary minister Necker, and wife of the Swedish ambassador, Baron von Staël. She was one of the greatest literary capacities of these years; and, as such, could not escape Humboldt's attention. He esteemed her highly, and praised her works. Madame de Staël was an enthusiastic admirer of Humboldt, and called him always, *la plus grande capacité de l'Europe*. She was not less intimate with Madame von Hum-

boldt, lived for some time with the family, at Rome, and saw them again in Paris, in subsequent years.

Before we accompany Humboldt on his journey to Spain, we must mention an essay, or letter, which he sent from Paris to his Weimar friends,—probably to Schiller. The essay is “On the present French tragic stage,” and was printed anonymously, in a journal edited by Goethe. It describes the French stage mannerism, and compares it with that of the German actor, who, he says, merely continues the work of the poet—gives the feeling and expression, without at the same time uniting in himself the talents of the artist and musician, thus making the character he represents an independent work of art. The French artist, on the contrary, exceeds in an opposite direction, and exaggerates nature; while the true ideal of representative or dramatic art unites the two qualities, modifying excess on both sides.

It is probable that the letters which Alexander wrote from Spain had determined Humboldt to undertake a journey thither. The events in France made a stay in Paris daily more inconvenient for foreigners, while Spain was now again at peace. Madame von Humboldt wrote home, in February, 1799,—“At latest my return to Berlin will be in about a year and a half. Our plans are so. End of next month we leave this place. I shall stay in the Pyrenees with the children during the summer, and Humboldt will, in the meantime, travel to Madrid, perhaps to Lisbon. In autumn he will join me again, and then we shall decide whether we live in Paris for the winter, and return home by way of England, or whether we can proceed from the south of France to Italy, and then return to Germany through Switzerland. Either of these plans would bring us home in about eighteen months.”

The Spanish journey was realized, although later than the letter states, and Madame von Humboldt, with all the children, accompanied her husband

through the entire Spanish peninsula. The family left Paris in July or August, 1799, and repaired to the south of France. From the shores of the Garonne, whose fertility Humboldt admired, they reached the northern point of the Pyrenees. We do not know how long the travellers remained here; they crossed over to Spain at St. Jean de Luz, in Bidassoa. From Bidassoa William von Humboldt and his caravan came to Biscay. Biscay and the Basque nations made the most favourable impression upon him, and excited a lasting interest. This nation—melted down to a small handful, while it was once spread over nearly the whole of the peninsula, and whose language, like, probably, no other in Europe, has remained almost unchanged from the earliest periods—had for him a great attraction, and was a desirable means for attaining to a more profound knowledge of the original inhabitants of Spain. The language of the Basque nations charmed him by its strange construction; the people, by their honesty and fidelity, by their partiality for their valleys, and their jealous love of their peculiar liberties and laws. The Spanish Basques, especially, excited his interest. If the French have more French sprightliness, the Spanish have the Spanish seriousness, though not the sternness of the Castilian, with whose indolence the industry of the Basques, and their good-natured cheerfulness, form a most agreeable contrast.

Humboldt entered the Biscayan soil near the boundary fortress of Fuenterrabia, on that portion which bears the name of Guipuzcoa. It was early in autumn when he reached these lovely mountain districts and valleys. The family journeyed across Tolosa to Vittoria, the capital of the district Alara. Here, as in all towns, the paintings in the churches and private galleries occupied his attention greatly. In Vittoria, especially, he praises a Magdalen by Titian, in the house of a Marquess de Alameda. The sketches which Humboldt has published of this journey conclude with his entrance on Castilian soil.



Our travellers soon reached the shores of the Ebro, and journeyed to Madrid across the barren plains of Castile. Humboldt's descriptions and impressions of this portion of the Spanish peninsula are only recorded in his letters to Goethe, and we have, therefore, no clue to them until this correspondence shall be published. We know only so much respecting the southern and western portion of Spain, that we can about gather what occupied him most there. When he composed his elegy to his expected son in January, 1800, in the Sierra Morena, he had been in Cadiz, had admired the splendour of the southern sea and the beautiful bay, had visited Lower Andalusia, Seville, and the mournful ruins of old Italica, and had traversed the immense ruins of the twice-destroyed Saguntum, the present Murviedro, and had crossed the happy plains of Valencia. These excursions prove that, next to the beauties of nature, nothing attracted him so much as the remnants of a classical world, which he found in these regions.

Our travellers must have learnt something of the perseverance of the Spaniards, for the family accompanied Humboldt on all these pilgrimages; the eldest daughter, about eight years of age, always in boy's clothes, and Madame von Humboldt in a critical state of health. One point which especially captivated Humboldt's attention was the Montserrat, near Barcelona, to which he made an excursion in March, 1800, and which he has beautifully described in a letter to Goethe, published in a geographical journal at the time, and now included in his collected works.

The journey was made on mules from Barcelona, through the valley of Llobregat. The Montserrat stands, as is well known, island-like, rising in the midst of the plain. Near the summit of the mountain, in it as it were, and surrounded by cones, on whose summits pious enthusiasm has planted those hermitages, stands the Benedictine cloister of the mountain. Humboldt was entertained by the monks with their celebrated hospitality. He gives a detailed

description of the mountain, of the arrangements and constitution of this peculiar world, and the life and character of the people who take refuge in these solitudes. From the cloister he leads the reader to the hermitages surrounding it; speaks of the extraordinary play of clouds beneath his feet, of the sea, the mountains of Rousillon, and the snow-covered tops of the Pyrenees in the distance, in an entirely peculiar manner, a master-piece of art. The letter concludes by an extract of a letter from his brother, who had visited the mountain in the previous year, and examined its mineralogic constitution.

The great Spanish journey terminated at the eastern point of the Pyrenees, and amid the plains and mountains of Catalonia. It was of lasting influence upon Humboldt, for this country, and this nation, especially, afforded him a treasure of enjoyment and instruction. The acquaintance with this southern primitive nation not only extended his knowledge of humanity, but it annihilated many of the prejudices existing against the character of this people in the rest of Europe. It is probable that Humboldt was one of the first among German statesmen who lent their attention to the Spanish rebellion. The peculiarities of the nation, and its various tribes, also afforded plentiful material for political instruction and reflection.

The fruits of this journey in art and science were not less abundant. His love and his appreciation of the fine arts, especially of painting, was increased, and also his knowledge of antiquity, and of the architecture of the ancients. The Basque language had excited his especial interest, and induced him to further investigations, and finally his journey was prolific for his other philological studies; in Spain, and afterwards in Rome, he brought together such a numerous collection of American dictionaries as had never before existed.

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In the spring of 1800 Humboldt with his family returned to Paris. Imminent and threatening wars

defeated all plans of travel, while Paris could be safely inhabited beneath the protection of the consulate, therefore departure from thence was postponed to the winter.

The life in Paris was spent as it had been on the previous occasion, and all the eminent Germans and other talented men living in Paris again frequented Madame von Humboldt's saloons. Among others whose society they enjoyed was that of Rahel Levin, who visited them here, and with whom a great intimacy seems to have subsisted.

In May, 1800, Madame von Humboldt was again confined of twins, a boy and a girl, of whom the former died shortly after his birth; the girl was named Adelheid. The birth of these children had been greeted in the elegy mentioned upon a former occasion. The departure from Paris was now again delayed, but in the spring of 1801 everything was prepared for it. On the last day of May they intended to proceed to Erfurt and Jena, and spend the winter in Tegel, when a sudden plan again delayed the journey a few months.

After the Spanish journey, Humboldt had devoted himself principally to the study of the Basque. Paris afforded him opportunities for this which he would have found nowhere else. He immediately planned a Basque-Spanish dictionary, compiled from the rare works and manuscripts in the extensive royal library. Many of the latter he copied verbatim, and received some pages on the language of the Basques from St. Croix, an eminent French philologist.

But all this did not satisfy his desire for knowledge. On the point of departing for Germany, he turned suddenly again to the south. This time he left his family in Paris, and undertook a second journey into the Spanish and French Basque provinces, with the intention of completing, by verbal communication, what was much too imperfect in the printed works. He spent several weeks in the most retired mountain-districts of the country, and especially sought out the

linguists there, before all, D. Pablo Pedro de Asterloa, pastor of Durango. He examined the important manuscripts this pastor had collected, and made extracts or verbatim copies from his great yet unpublished work. Another linguist whom he visited was the pastor Moguel, in Marquina, one of the first philologists in Biscay, who translated the commencement of the "Sallustian Catiline" for Humboldt.

Humboldt was, however, not equally successful in attaining all the purposes of his journey. "It was," he says, "one of the principal objects of my journey to Biscay, to find the traces which might still exist of the oldest history and oldest condition of the people, in old sagas or in national songs. But I was quite disappointed in the hope of finding anything of importance. In no other country has the mistaken zeal of the earliest Christian inhabitants been so successful in destroying all traces of heathen antiquity. It is impossible to attain a satisfactory account of the constitution, religion, or manners of the ancient Basques; and but a very few traces of these old times have survived in the language, the popular names of the months and days, a few proper names, national dances or fables." Of old songs he could only find one very imperfect fragment, whose age also seemed to him doubtful for many reasons. He met with it in a collection of manuscripts in the house of M. Heugartegui, of Marquina.

Humboldt noted down his remarks on the spot where he made them, and then hastened back to Paris to his family. His interest in the Basque nations remained equally strong for years, but the change of residence, as well as of occupation, prevented his publishing the results of his researches until a much later period.

In the summer of 1801 the whole family returned to Berlin through Erfurt and Weimar, and lived there and in Tegel a year. During this time the youngest daughter Gabriele was born.

This lengthened sojourn in their native town was made more agreeable by the improvement in the intellectual life of Berlin which had taken place during their absence; and it must also have afforded Humboldt the greatest pleasure to find that Schiller's works were successfully represented on the Berlin stage. It was also of interest to watch the statesmen who were preparing themselves to gather round their king and his noble queen, and save Prussia from the state of corruption into which it had fallen, and whose names gave great promise of the future. Still Humboldt would not have felt induced to exchange his leisure and independence for public official service, had not the requirements of the latter accidentally harmonized with his own plans. The Prussian minister in Rome had sent in his request for dismissal, and Beyme, a privy councillor of the King of Prussia, proposed Humboldt as the future minister resident in Rome. This post was well adapted for the classically-educated and art-loving man, as he would there have abundant and the best opportunities of devoting himself to his intellectual development. He anticipated only advantage from his stay in Rome, combined as it would be with some business occupation. When he had been in Rome some time, he wrote to Schiller: "I was in no desirable mood in Berlin, and even in Paris. I had been in no fortunate productive vein for some years; I knew so many things, and some better than many others, and yet they would not combine to a result, and I could not be satisfied with the active part of my existence. It seemed therefore better to me to give my activity a positive, even if it were only a common, occupation, and I sought only for one which would at the same time take me again to some important spot." At the same time he assured Schiller that nothing would make him forgetful of his higher calling, and it was on this occasion that he told him that ideas would always be to him the highest in the world. "But it is also true," he continues, "that if all one's time is

leisure time, and no compulsion forces a positive application of it, much time would be lost."

Under such auspices, Humboldt entered upon his diplomatic career. He was made a chamberlain, and was appointed privy councillor of legation, and resident minister at the papal court, and departed for his post, in the autumn of 1802, accompanied by his whole family.

But he did not depart without having taken leave of the friends of his heart. In Halle he visited Wolf; in Weimar, Goethe and Schiller. He also took with him a young philologist, Dr. Riemer, as tutor to his children.

He did not then imagine that he should not see Schiller again, for the latter was now at the zenith of his activity. The friends conversed much of Rome, and Schiller imparted to him a plan for a history of Rome, which he was deferring to days when the poetic inspiration might perhaps have left him.

Filled with such impressions and ideas, Humboldt with his family crossed the Alps.

CHAPTER VI.

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WE now enter upon one of the most important periods of Humboldt's life, one to which he ever afterwards referred with love and gratitude. He arrived in upper Italy and in Milan in October, 1802, and it is probable that he visited Venice and Florence on the way to Rome, as he did not arrive in the dwelling which had been prepared for him, the Villa di Malta, till the 25th November. This villa and former summer residence of the knights of Malta, inhabited also by the Duchess Amalie of Weimar and Herder, and now the property of King Ludwig of Bavaria, is situated at the foot of the Pincian Hill. A high turret, monasterical arrangements, many stairs through outbuildings and wings, a whole club of houses grouped round lovely gardens, and favoured by the most beautiful views towards all sides, that is the seat which has already harboured so many artists and art friends, men of all nations, and which now became the residence of the Humboldt family. From the wing which they occupied they enjoyed the view to the South-east; the distant prospect over the Campagna to the heights of Albano was before them, and made a never-to-be-forgotten first impression. Friederike Brun, who lived in Rome at that time and in the same villa, has described their arrival:—"After long waiting, a heavily laden travelling-carriage drove slowly up the steep ascent. The father has already descended; a little child which can walk, and a very small one carefully wrapped up, are handed out to the nurses, who have also descended. Now one, two, three

boys jump out of the carriage, and then the fatigued, anxious mother." The eldest daughter had again made the journey in boy's attire, Adelheid, the next one, was only in her third year, and the youngest was about six months old and seemed not likely to live much longer. The mother had not recovered from the severe illness she had undergone in Berlin. The youngest child soon, however, revived under her care, "and scarcely," continues our informant, "had our amiable neighbour been a fortnight in Rome, when, in spite of her cares by day and night, we saw her beautiful eyes, radiant with love and mind, brighten again, her chesnut hair curled round her lovely head, her cheeks bloomed again, and the expressive mouth smiled with its charmingly mischievous smile."

The family was soon settled in Rome, so that they only complained of the smoky chimneys. Dr. Riemer took charge of the boys; a German doctor whom they had brought with them to Italy, Dr. Kohlrausch, gave his, not, alas! always successful medical services to the family.

From the first day of their arrival in Rome their hospitable house was thrown open to their friends and acquaintance, who were invited once for all to tea every evening. The first winter was spent in intimate intercourse with the artists resident in Rome, especially Thorwaldsen, Schick, Reinhard, Keller, Lund, and with Zoëga, Fernow, Bonstetten, Friederike Brun, and others.

Humboldt himself was also soon at home in the Eternal City. Alone with his wife, or only accompanied by the elder children, he wandered through its environs that he might revel in undisturbed enjoyment of its beauties. He refers to this period in one of his best sonnets, in which he says that two shadows gliding beside each other are frequently used as a comparison for intimate union, but that he and his companion were much more as one.

No land excited and satisfied so many expectations which Humboldt had formed, as Italy. Not only the



soil and the climate, but the people, their language, art, and literature, refreshed and pleased him. And his love for antiquity could in no other country revel amid such interesting associations. Italy [was] foremost in nearly all the branches of civic and political activity; and in the centuries in which the modern tendencies first rose in intellectual importance to oppose the ancient life, its history surpasses that of all other nations. According to Humboldt's opinion, no country can be compared to Italy in the number of eminent men which it has produced. The study of art and nature was developed here earlier than with any other nation. Even the tone and sterling strength of its language, its poetic fitness, filled him with admiration. Of all the modifications which the Latin has undergone, this seems to him as the most interesting, and he has made its remarkable formation the subject of especial consideration in the introduction to his great philological work. In no other Romanic language has the modern spirit remained so faithful to the ancient form, without detriment, however, to its independence or peculiar characteristic. Humboldt also acknowledged the great and beautiful in Italian art and poetry, which harmonized more with his spiritual tendency than the severe Northern art; so Raphael interested him more than Shakespeare, and Ariosto more than Ossian's shadowy creations. He only prefers the Germanic tendency where depth of meaning and truth of characteristic is so ornamented with classic beauty, as we find it with the great modern German poets. He could not, of course, with all his appreciation of the Italian world and its greatness, overlook the present degradation of the people; but he forgave them, in consideration of what they had once been and once achieved.

If Italy, as a whole, was so dear to Humboldt, it was natural that Rome, the Eternal City, should excite an enthusiasm in him which was sometimes carried very far, but whose deeply-felt expression is irresistibly attractive to his admirers. Rome's great-

ness lies in its twofold past, and in the ruins which reveal it. These ruins seemed to Humboldt such a peculiar whole, that he grudged the spot another historical development, from fear that what already existed might be injured by it. He cherished this enthusiasm not only in the moment of enjoyment: the feeling for Roman greatness never left him, but stands forth as the theme of a whole course of sonnets, and is also expressed in an article on Goethe's second visit to Rome, in which he says—"Rome's greatness consists principally in something connected indissolubly with the whole; with the mixture of ancient and modern splendour; with the ruins which meet the eye for miles; with the plains, the mountains enclosing it, the long series of historic recollections, and indistinct tradition. This was plainly shown at the time when it was robbed of its best treasures of art, of the memorable remnants of antiquity, in a shameful and undignified manner. There will always be a great difference between countries and towns which were themselves the scenes of classical antiquity, and those which were never warmed by that first ennobling influence on humanity. In the latter, the antique works of art resemble only a collection of articles brought together from all parts; in the former, the soil itself is impregnated with the feeling, and seems to bear them in inexhaustible profusion, like trees and fruit." But few can share such high appreciation and enjoyment truly. The Romans know their city more from the reflex of the impression it makes on strangers, and the real traveller rarely can harmonize in such exalted feelings as those of Humboldt. It is only with the artists residing there that one can associate; with such who make it their intellectual and spiritual home; who commence studies there, or continue former ones, or give themselves up entirely to the pure enjoyment which is afforded to all the senses, and yet affords such an inexhaustible depth for research.

Humboldt wrote a long elegy, entitled "Rome,"

which was published with his name in 1806, in Berlin. It is the largest poem he has written, and may be considered one of the most remarkable poetical productions, both for its sentiments and the highly-poetical form.

This poem is written with great ease and clearness ; and only where the poet soars into entirely ideal regions, as towards the conclusion, his thoughts refuse to take a very comprehensible form. The poem was originally dedicated to Humboldt's friend, Frau von Wolzogen, whom he addresses in the last verses.

The Humboldts left the Villa di Malta in March of the following year, as it was too small for them, and removed to a more roomy residence in the Strada Gregoriana, on the Trinita del Monte, quite near the Spanish Place, which was the central point for strangers ; and here only was Humboldt able to make his house a temple of hospitality, open to every worthy comer.

From his large, lofty rooms, high windows afforded the most beautiful view, and his house was truly Italian in its architecture, while German sociality reigned within. Every evening the most mixed society was gathered together at tea, and reminded those present of Berlin or London companies. The theatre only disturbed this arrangement sometimes, and then Humboldt did not fail to take as many friends as possible with him. Select friends were invited to dinner, and after dinner they frequently drove friends or strangers in their carriage through the town and its environs. Report says that a central reunion, like the one offered in Humboldt's house, has not since that time existed in Rome.

High and low met here ; the stream of strangers which constantly flows through Rome visited these halls ; all intellectual and artistic celebrities were united in it, before all the German artists resident in Rome. For a quiet mind, the crowd which met here every evening was almost too much. Here a cardinal conversed with a German professor ; there a painter was obliged to converse for hours with a duchess in

languages he barely understood. In the background Humboldt conversed with his friend Zoëga; while Lucien Bonaparte was paying his court to the lady of the house. Madame von Humboldt, while she did the honours of the house, displayed more than anywhere else her great social talents. She was the soul of this splendid circle, which she filled with her mind and amiability,—not her husband, who lived more for a few chosen individuals. Such was their reputation at the time, that few books written on Rome or Roman life at that period neglect to name them with praise and respect.

In autumn a pause generally intervened, for then Humboldt repaired to the country for some time with his family. Immediately after his arrival in Rome he hired a summer residence in Ariccia, and went there in July of the following year; but a domestic misfortune occasioned their quick return to Rome, and made them take an aversion to this residence in future.

In the autumn of 1804, we find him in Albano. Here, and in the neighbouring Marino, he made a short stay every year, and excursions to more distant points were sometimes undertaken from here; but we know nothing of longer journeys to different parts of Italy, which he must doubtless have made. We do not know whether he was in Sicily—how he liked Florence—not even that he visited Naples; though so much is sure, that nothing, to his mind, equalled the influence Rome exercised over him.

Unalloyed happiness rarely falls to the lot of man. Perhaps it is that we may the better enjoy its pleasures that pain is mingled with them by fate. In the first year of his Roman residence, Humboldt met with a heavy loss, that of his eldest boy. Since July 1803 his family had been frequently in Ariccia, to spend the hottest part of the summer there in the cool air. In this summer the heat was insupportable even in the hills, and the strangers especially fell victims to it. About three weeks after this misfortune

Humboldt writes to Schiller: "Rome, 27th August. I write to you, dear friend, with a sad heart. I may say that, since I live, the first misfortune has befallen me, but this first blow is almost the severest that could have come." His eldest son, Wilhelm, had been suddenly carried off by a malignant fever. The child had scarcely been ill a few days. A slight attack of fever was followed by violent bleeding of the nose. The family was in Ariccia, but Dr. Kohlrausch—a doctor who did not perhaps merit such confidence—was with them. He did what he could, but in thirty-six hours the boy fell a victim to the violence of the attack. "His death"—so writes his afflicted father—"was calm, very calm; he had cheerful dreams,—did not suffer nor expect death. He now lies at the foot of the pyramid of Caius Cestus, which Goethe can describe to you. I have lost very much with this child. Among them all, he was most fond of being with me; he scarcely ever left me, particularly during the last few months; I occupied myself regularly with him; he always walked with me, asked about everything, knew most of the localities and the ruins, and was every one's favourite, because he spoke with all, and in tolerably good Italian. Now this is all gone! This death has robbed me of all my confidence in life. I trust no more to my fortune, to fate, to the strength of events. If this impetuous, blooming, strong life could be extinguished so suddenly, what then is certain? And, on the other hand, I have all at once gained an infinite conviction: I never feared death, nor had a childish love of life; but if a being we love is dead, the sensation is different. We think ourselves at home in two worlds."

Immediately after this blow, the family hastened to the town, for a similar misfortune threatened another child. The younger boy, Theodor, was attacked by the same illness, a severe brain fever, only with less suddenly dangerous symptoms. For three days his recovery was despaired of, but he was saved. It may be imagined how much the anxious mother suffered

during this time, and Humboldt states that she behaved with extraordinary calmness and self-possession. He afterwards feared a sudden outbreak of the repressed evil, but it did not appear, and all things would have gone on as before in Humboldt's house if the loss could have been so easily forgotten. A friend of Humboldt's writes, on the 2nd September, 1803,—“The sadness which reigns in this formerly so merry house, the only one I frequent, and whose inmates are the most amiable people I know, has quite depressed my spirits.”

Schiller was also much affected by his friend's loss, and announced it at once to Goethe. He says in his letter,—“From the inclosure you will see that our friend Humboldt has been sorely afflicted. Write to him, if you can, a word of sympathy. I pity him much, for this child was the most hopeful of them all.” On the 12th September, he writes to the afflicted father: “In this sad event I can do nothing but share your grief. You were justified in cherishing the brightest hopes. Everything was combined to promise a happy life to the boy, and now all these hopes are violently destroyed. Like you, no great affliction has hitherto visited me, and I cannot refrain, on this occasion, to look into my own heart, and fancy the possible loss of those dear to me. With my failing health, I had attained to the firm conviction that I should never be so situated, but your loss, my dear friend, convinces me that all these calculations are deceptive.” He advises him at the same time, if the climate should be too trying for his wife and children, rather to set aside all other considerations, as he was always master of his own fate.

Hereupon Humboldt breaks out anew into complaints: “The loss I have suffered,” he replies, on the 22nd October, “is ever present to my imagination, and nothing can compensate for it. Even in the first moments, dearest friend, the pain did not deprive me of mental clearness, or of a certain calmness. But a sadness and longing overpower me since that unfor-

fortunate epoch, of which I can give you no description. It seems to me, that the death of a child has something more affecting than the death of an adult person. Not ruled yet by its own will, it trustfully follows that of others, and it seems as if one had deceived its careless confidence, even if death is only the result of mere blind fate.

"Dear Schiller, why are you not here now? For that I left you, I do not like to think. Rome has enchanted me in every way, and it is even difficult to leave the soil to which one has entrusted one beloved thing. You may imagine that I should not remain a moment here, if I had to fear the least danger for my family." But this, he says, is not at all the case. Peculiar circumstances had been combined in the one unfortunate case; the blooming health of the other children showed that the climate was not unfavourable. "You should have seen poor Wilhelm a day only before his illness; and the Princess Rudolstadt will tell you that he bloomed like a rose, and death has disfigured him but little. . . . . You can, therefore, let me remain here a few years longer. I cannot tell you how I enjoy this residence. Here everything is inspiring and cheering. I am more fruitful in ideas, and even the sadness, even the bitter pain, leaves a clearness and cheerfulness of mind."

In the commencement of the following year, soon after the loss above mentioned, Madame von Humboldt gave birth to a daughter, who died very soon. She was, however, in such a delicate state of health, that she undertook a journey to Germany to restore it. Her doctor, Dr. Kohlrausch, accompanied her. The newly-born child seems to have died on this journey. She visited the friends in Weimar in May; it must have been a painful pleasure to Schiller to meet her again in such bad health, and he does not conceal to Humboldt that he felt uneasy about her. From Weimar Madame von Humboldt repaired to Paris, as it seems, with the intention of gathering

speedier intelligence of Alexander von Humboldt, whose return was anxiously anticipated.

Humboldt had received a letter from Havanna, from his brother, announcing his approaching return, but soon afterwards the report was spread that the celebrated traveller had died of the yellow fever, when he was on the point of embarkation. It now happened that Madame von Humboldt was in Paris, when Alexander, with all his treasures, entered the Garonne, in August, 1804. As soon as the news of this happy event arrived in Paris, the sister-in-law was at once informed of it by the secretary of the National Institute. Alexander hastened from Bordeaux to Paris, delighted to meet here a member of his family whom he had not anticipated seeing till the commencement of the following year in Rome.

Madame von Humboldt, after another confinement in the autumn of 1804, left Paris in the spring of 1805, and with renewed strength joined her husband, who had, in the mean time, spent a happy summer, devoted to solitude and study, in his retreat of Albano. The new comer was a boy, and was named Gustavus, but died after a few years, in 1807, in Rome. Both sons are buried at the foot of the Cestius pyramid, the well-known burial place of protestants in Rome; but they lie in an inclosure presented by the Roman people to this family. Two broken antique pillars designate the spot where the children rest.

The year 1805 was the finest which the family spent in Rome; not only that a great number of distinguished men were living in it during this period, but in spring, Alexander arrived on a lengthened visit to his brother.

The six years which William spent in Rome, were, in reality, also years of leisure, for the official business he had undertaken occupied him but little. Schiller had feared it, but Humboldt assured him that this was not the case; that he lived as before, even if he



had not quite so much time at his command. "You must remember," he writes, on the 22nd October, 1803, "that my business here has little to do with politics. It does not therefore oblige me, as another embassy would, to spend my time in going to parties, and still less have I many cares or responsibilities. The most important part of my duties consists in single commissions; these generally refer only to private interests, and are important to me only in so far as it is expected that I should execute them in one or the other way; and, as it is interesting to prevent, as far as possible, the influence which they wish to extend from Rome over the most distant places. These things do indeed cost time, they occupy several days of the week, if I include the extensive correspondence they entail, and the writing, visiting, &c. The political correspondence, though it is a mere communication of news, has to be made, and, as I do everything myself, it certainly needs some degree of industry and order to accomplish all this, and have some leisure besides." In this he succeeded, and as he had wished to be forced to a regular application of his time, by some business compulsion, there was no cause to regret his choice and determination.

The post of the Prussian Ambassador to the papal court was a very favourable one at that period, and has probably never been so to such a degree since then. Before Pius VII., who had only a short time previously succeeded to the holy chair, Prussia had no standing embassy in Rome. But at this period, for the first time for centuries, the Holy See was threatened by violence, and from a principal partizan of catholicism, while the other partizan had enough to do to protect itself, so that it could not save others. The struggle of France against the papal power, commenced already at the end of the eighteenth century; the head of the church was deposed and imprisoned. In 1800, the country was cleared of its enemies, who, however, carried off some of the most

valuable works of art. Some years of peace followed, but with the increasing good fortune of the French emperor, these insults were renewed, and when Humboldt left Rome, the immediate destruction of the papal dominions seemed approaching.

All the weapons of the hierarchy, submission or opposition, were alike inefficient against Napoleon's power. The pope went to Paris in 1804, to crown Napoleon, but in vain. With the seizure of the citadel of Ancona, a new series of hostilities commenced, which terminated in July, 1809, with the imprisonment and abduction of the pope, and with the incorporation of the dominions of the church in the French empire.

In such times of distress and ill usage by old friends, those rise into favour who were before more disregarded or treated with suspicion. Prussia, which had offered no insults to the pope, and was even defeated by the common enemy, made this experience, and was treated with more consideration, as it sent such an extraordinary and skilful representative to Rome as Humboldt, an individual who imposed respect in every situation, and whose peculiar talents were perhaps better esteemed in the Vatican than subsequently, sometimes, in great assemblies of European diplomatists. His partiality for antiquity, for art, his patronage of foreign artists, not only German or Prussian, which he exercised liberally, and in which he has since been imitated by all the ambassadors of Prussia; the hospitality and liberality of his house, at a time when want and distress frequently reigned in Rome; all this gained for Humboldt the especial favour and esteem, not only of the government, but of the Roman people.

This was shown on every occasion. If a great solemnity, a canonization, took place, tickets were always reserved for him and his friends; sometimes even the cardinal's box was given to him. Another time, a foreign, but not a Prussian artist, had insulted an eminent person in Rome, so that he was banished,

and no applications for mercy were of any avail. But at Humboldt's intercession, the matter was dropped. In his favour, the Romans even departed from established rules, and gave him freely what they had never conceded to the protestants. Their burial place by the Cestius pyramid is an open unenclosed space, and may not be enclosed or fastened. But to the family of Humboldt, the Romans voted an inclosed space among the other graves, and presented the spot to them.

Although Humboldt had, as he himself says, little to do with politics at the post in which he commenced his diplomatic career, it was yet very well calculated to develope in him the ability and finesse which characterized him so eminently in subsequent years. If there is a spot on which one can see through all the tricks and cunning of low diplomacy, and learn the greatness of the true science, Rome is the place. Gonsalvi himself was a head with whom alone it was worth while to be matched.

Of the other diplomatists acting in Rome at this time we need only mention Cardinal Fesch, as Neapolitan ambassador, and the Danish envoy, Baron von Schubart, who, being accredited also to the court of Florence, generally resided in Leghorn. Schubart was also celebrated as the patron of his countrymen, especially of artists. He was intimate with Humboldt and a welcome guest in his house, which was often obliged to receive titled visitors who had nothing but their rank to recommend them.

Humboldt and his wife took a lively interest in the works of contemporary artists. The latter showed her admiration for all branches of art, and she was indeed more partial to the romantic style of painting than her husband, whom the bright figures and severe forms of the ancients, and our classic poetry, had rendered more averse to the sombre, confused, and sometimes even morbid character of many of the modern art productions. Besides this, poetry alone had occupied him in his youth, and the other arts only when his

archæological studies had rendered it necessary. His greater journeys, however, tended to cultivate his love for art in all directions, except in music, for which nature had denied him any talent.

. Strange that Humboldt should here also greet and assist the progress of a better\* time. The art of painting applied itself, with great success, to emulate the depth, warmth, and beauty of a Raphael and a Michael Angelo. The poetic feeling of the German nation was destined to give at least an imitation of that great past. At the same time young sculptors endeavoured to conceive their representations strictly and purely in the spirit of Greek art, and to refrain from every vain ornamentation. Thus in both arts Germans achieved what had been denied to the most eminent talents of Italy and France. This renovation proceeded from a few. In painting, the first were Asmus Karsten from Schleswig, with the two Würtemberg artists, Eberhard Wächter and Gottlieb Schick; in plastic art, the Dane Thorwaldsen, and the German sculptor Rauch, who followed close upon Thorwaldsen. When Humboldt arrived in Rome, Karstens had unfortunately already expired, and the surviving veteran Wächter had returned to his native country, but Thorwaldsen had achieved his first triumphs, Schick had but lately arrived and found a congenial sphere here, and the young Rauch arrived soon afterwards. The first celebrated modern works of art were produced in quick succession; before all, Thorwaldsen's Jason, and Schick's Apollo among the Shepherds.

If Humboldt owed a great part of his artistic education to his Roman residence, he has richly compensated this gain to the artists in Rome. For it was more than common hospitality that they enjoyed in his house. He and his wife advanced art and artists with advice and active assistance. They cared for them when they fell sick, they assisted them with funds, so that they might not be forced to give away their works below their value. They gave large orders, and had great influence in introducing artists and

their productions into the first society, and thus obtaining reputation and honour for true art.

When the Humboldts arrived in Rome they found Thorwaldsen already there, and an inferior German sculptor, Heinrich Keller, from Zürich. Of painters they had the Austrian pensioner, Abel; the young Schick from Stuttgart; then the landscape-painter, Carl Reinhardt; the well-known veteran of German art in Rome, Joseph Koch, Tyrolez, and the Englishman Wallis; the drawer and copper-plate engraver, Imelin; the landscape-drawer, Carl Grass; and the portrait-painter, Angelica Kaufmann. Each year brought a new relay of talents, principally of those who had already adopted the modern romantic school. Among these are the sculptors Rauch and Franz Tieck; of painters, the two brothers Riepenhausen, Wagner of Würzburg, Jagemann of Weimar, Platner of Leipzig, and Leybold and Steinkopf from Stuttgart. We must not forget Muller, who is indeed better known as a painter, and who remained an amateur in art, but who is valuable as a connoisseur and critic. Humboldt seems to have been partial to Imelin, and names him to Schiller as an extremely upright man. Grass also was a welcome guest. He was not a great artist, but a variously cultivated man, and an enthusiastic admirer of Schiller, and best known for the description of a Sicilian journey. His poetry was only a poor imitation of the great master. His talent seems to have been devoted to the "*Morgenblatt*," which contained his "*Farewell to Summer*," dedicated to Madame von Humboldt. Humboldt himself joked with him. Thus we are told by some one who visited the family in Albano in autumn, and who purposed looking at the country before dinner, that Humboldt said, "If you should meet a man whose one shirt collar falls down while the other rises up very high, you have that genius the landscape-painter Grass before you." The stranger found this satirical announcement confirmed by the reality.

\*But Schick, Thorwaldsen, and Rauch, were those

who received most attention and consideration from the Humboldts; and Thorwaldsen subsequently made one of his finest works, his *Speranza*, for Madame von Humboldt. They also soon detected the great talent of the painter Schick. They had met him in Paris, where he had commenced his first studies under David. In Rome his tendencies were more developed, and they showed him every favour. He was almost looked upon as an inmate of the household; and he had reason to mention these favours in the most grateful manner in his letters home. He wrote, in April, 1803, to his family in Stuttgart: "The house of the Prussian ambassador is the place of rendezvous for all the eminent men in Rome; of all those who visit there, I am almost the only one who has no title and is of humble extraction, and yet hundreds of proofs have convinced me that I am not the least liked among them. I owe it to this family if my ideas here expand." Another time he relates that Humboldt had composed the dedication with which he accompanied a picture for the Duke of Wurtemberg. Schick was also an excellent portrait-painter, and has executed most beautiful productions in this respect for Humboldt; works which belong to the finest things that modern art has produced, and which are now ornaments to the castle of Tegel. They are as follows: 1, the sketch for a family picture, the mother surrounded by her children; 2, the portrait of Madame von Humboldt and one of her sons; 3, the portrait of the eldest daughter, with a guitar in her hand, a full-length full-size portrait; and 4, a splendid oil-painting, the two youngest girls, Adelheid and Gabriele, who, embracing each other, sit barefoot on a wall. These and many other works Schick made for Humboldt while resting from his greater historical works. Humboldt did much to extend Schick's fame in Rome, and subsequently in Vienna and Berlin. Schick unfortunately fell ill in a few years, and could therefore not accept their kind invitation to Vienna. He would probably have found a remunerative ap-

pointment in Berlin, which Humboldt was endeavouring to secure for him, but he died shortly after his return to Germany, in 1812. An unfinished oil-picture—Christ as a youth, sleeping, and guarded by angels—Madame von Humboldt was anxious to secure at any price, but the family would not sell it. The third of the artists they distinguished was Rauch. He came to Rome in 1805, and during six years was received by them with affectionate hospitality. He made some statues for the family during that time—namely, Mars, and Diomedes wounded, and the statue of a young girl, a daughter of Humboldt, which he subsequently executed in marble.

The country, its history, and the treasures contained in the town and its vicinity, were also of the greatest interest for Humboldt in his studies. What treasures are alone contained in the library of the Vatican! And how many things Humboldt found here which he would have sought in vain elsewhere, and which were especially valuable for his extensive philological studies, for which no one could offer more resources than the Propaganda of Rome. Humboldt frequently enumerates the works he met with in the extensive library of the Collegio Romano. He also collected American grammars during his Italian residence. The investigations into the Coptic language were in vogue just then, and the well-known museum of Cardinal Borgia, of Velletri, offered materials for hieroglyphic studies. Indeed, the classic soil could not but afford incalculable treasures to a mind which had from afar already penetrated into its sanctuaries.

All this, however, only occupied his genius very partially, and he was entirely without personal incitement. We cannot, therefore, wonder if we always see him look back longingly to his German friends. In this spirit he writes to Wolf, on the 20th July, 1805: "The pleasure I should feel in accompanying you here is beyond description. It would be, after years, the first truly intellect-satisfying conversation. The scientific society which can be had here is dry

and insipid. Even Zoëga, who certainly has extensive views, is wanting in lively interest. He is a universal indifferentist and sceptic; and though his erudition is not injured thereby, his conversation loses its charm. You would be interested in seeing Zoëga. My brother even remarked that his society is not at all conducive to excite the productive faculties, but rather the contrary. You know," continues Humboldt, "that Spalding (the philologist from Berlin) is here. But I have not enjoyed his society as much as I might have done. . . I find, indeed, that he has become more spiritless, and can speak of nothing now but of long and short syllables, and of etymologies. He was entirely occupied here with his whole family, wife, son, &c. Would you believe that during his visit of six weeks to Rome, I once found him, at noon, playing cards *en famille*. He did our nation little honour. Every one acknowledged his good nature; but his pedantry, his rage to make bad verses in all languages, and his shallowness, have alternately surprised and disgusted Zoëga, Marina, and all the better class. Imagine only that here, in the Corsinian Library, he copied thirty to forty Homeric—genuine Homeric—verses out of the Iliad, which were only not placed in their proper place as *new ones*, that he related his discovery to all, and pretended to have found barbaric words, such as *κεκετορ*, in them, nor would he let Zoëga convince him of his error till some days later. If he had only not boasted of all this so, and to me! He has made innumerable verses, and always German and Latin at the same time, and sometimes Greek also, but he will certainly not have profited in the least by his journey. He searched for Quintilian everywhere, and then scarcely looked at it. You will feel, my friend, that this impression of a German scholar needs to be wiped away.

"I know of no news to tell you. Here a new book is written about twice in ten years, and the remainder of the time it is talked of. You know what



is being done here. Antiquities are dug up now and then, here and there, but none of any importance, as these labours are not regularly or perseveringly prosecuted. Fea's discoveries near the Pantheon might be important, if he did not look at them in a very casual manner, then assert his opinion very obstinately, and then generally fill up the holes again, which is indeed the best way to escape contradiction."

Humboldt says himself, that of the Roman scholars he esteemed Monsignor Marini, the predecessor of Cardinal Mai as president of the library of the Vatican, most highly. Fea, the well-known editor of "Horace," is described in the above letter; and of the other Italian celebrities little can be said. Humboldt's most intimate scientific friend was, as we have already stated, Georg Zoëga, born in Jütland, but educated entirely as a German. His profound knowledge of antiquity of languages, and his accurate acquaintance with the topography of old and new Rome, made him an interesting companion for Humboldt. His amiable and fine nature had been, at an early age, broken down by care and misfortune, so that Humboldt found him sometimes a by no means cheering companion. But for Zoëga, in the last sad years of his life, this friendship was all the more beneficial, and Humboldt's house was the only one which the failing invalid still visited. Humboldt made him his companion in Rome and its environs, and he could scarcely have found a more appropriate one. He in return assisted, sympathized with, and inspired him in his studies. He no doubt joined him in his studies of the Coptic, and of the subsequently better-understood hieroglyphics. He took part in his investigations of the antique bas-reliefs, and in his topography of Rome. Very shortly after Zoëga died, Humboldt left Rome.

It is time now to refer to the intellectual productions of Humboldt during his Roman residence, and to such of these as have been published. Rome influenced his productive talent favourably, and if the

study of the place deterred him, as he says, from independent productions; if he called himself and his family, in joke, the people that spend their days in walking; if, also, his official duties occupied a portion of his time, and if he was carried away sometimes by a contemplative enjoyment of the great and beautiful in art, and sometimes by the demands of social life, we must consider, also, that he had accustomed himself from his youth upwards to a restless activity, and most conscientious application of his time; that he did more in hours stolen from his ordinary occupations than others in a lifetime, and that subsequently he found time, in the maddest whirl of business, and when overwhelmed with the most difficult affairs, to cultivate his favourite tendencies. How much more could he not do this while he was in Rome, with so much leisure to live for himself, in a circle which excited and elevated him, and where nothing existed of the circumstances which had so frequently depressed and annoyed him in Berlin and Paris. Here he felt himself more fruitful in ideas, and if he completed few works, he was in the real happy vein for production, and the creative, the poetic spirit, of which scarcely a trace existed in the days of Jena, developed itself more and more.

Two larger didactic lyric effusions are published, which were written during the residence in Rome—the elegy, “Rome,” which we have already referred to, and a poem to Alexander von Humboldt, written in Albano, September, 1808, which was published by the latter after his brother’s death. It was the reply of William to the great descriptions which his brother had given him on his return, verbally and in his “Views of Nature.” This first result of the great journey had been dedicated to him by Alexander, and the poem reflects the impression made by it; it transports us to the midst of that great and wild nature, the uncultivatedness and the distant future of this new world. It compares it with the poverty and the greatness of the old world,

shows the Indians the example of the Pelasgians and Hellenes, and gives an interpretation of the great laws of historical life. In matter and form this poem ranks with his two former ones, the elegy to his son, and that on Rome. In all we find poetry allied with the philosophy of history, as in Schiller's "Poems on Civilization," except that Humboldt's have a more personal subject, and that therefore personal feelings of enthusiasm have a freer vent in them, though they certainly are second to Schiller's in talent and perfection. It is, however, a fine testimony of fraternal love.

The other fruits of Humboldt's literary activity are mentioned in a sketch which Schlegel sent to Goethe in 1805, under the title, "Artistic and Literary News from Rome." He says, among other things, "Herr von Humboldt, the Prussian ambassador to the papal court, has completed a translation of the 'Agamemnon' of Æschylus in verse, and even of what is not lyric, the trimeters, the anapests, and the trochaic tetrameters, exactly in the metres of the original, with the greatest fidelity, and in a language worthy of the pathos of the old master. The publication of this production would be the more welcome, as we have hitherto only Stolberg's translation, which cannot be called faithful, either according to the spirit or the form. Herr von Humboldt is also continuing to devote his attention to linguistic researches on the Biscayan dialect, and to the origin and connexion of European languages in general. We wish he would publish something on ancient Rome, with whose ruins he has become perfectly acquainted during the few years of his residence there; such a work, composed not only in an antiquarian, but in an historical and philosophical point of view, could not fail to be very interesting."

\* The translation of "Agamemnon" on which Humboldt was employed during his residence in Jena, was entirely recommenced and concluded at once in Albano, during the summer of 1804. Schlegel now advised its immediate publication, but Humboldt kept

it ten years longer, so that he might correct and improve the most minute faults. Humboldt's linguistic studies now received a renewed impulse from the treasures Alexander had brought with him. The latter had during his journey collected, with infinite trouble, from cloisters and missionary establishments, a considerable number of books of hitherto unknown American dialects. He indeed lent this collection for a few years to the completer of "Mithridates," Professor Vater, of Königsberg, and submitted a few to Franz Schlegel, but he definitely gave them all to his brother, who was now able to include the new world in his studies, and to investigate these languages thoroughly. William even increased this collection of American grammars and dictionaries by new treasures found in Rome, and among other things obtained possession of fourteen manuscripts which had been copied from manuscripts of the Abbé Hervas and the Roman Propaganda.

Humboldt's merits were now acknowledged on all sides. F. A. Wolf publicly named him as the one who had assisted him in a profounder study of archæology. The Royal Society of Sciences in Göttingen, in 1803, elected him and his brother as foreign members of their historical philological section, and in 1808, he was elected by the Royal Academy of Berlin as corresponding member.

The state also acknowledged his services. After having been named resident ambassador in Rome by a cabinet order of the 15th May, 1802, he was raised, in 1805, to the dignity of minister-resident, and in 1806 to that of minister plenipotentiary in Rome.

Humboldt had so accustomed himself to his city during a residence there of six years, that he thought never to return to reside in his native country. And he would have willingly remained there longer had not the terrible catastrophe overwhelmed Prussia which he had probably long anticipated, and in consequence of which he was required for more active service.

France had become mightier and more presumptuous under the empire, and the thunder of war, though distant, was heard in the ancient Rome. Austria's defeat in 1805 was bad enough, and of melancholy import to every German. Italy was threatened anew, the French advanced towards Naples, and though Rome's neutrality was for a time respected, its speedy destruction was anticipated. Prussia was still standing, though in a lamentable condition; it had again refrained from the general combat. It accepted, as the bribing booty from France, Hanover, which was then again secretly offered to its former possessor, so that Prussia, everywhere entangled, could no longer avoid the unequal combat. The ancient Prussian glory was destroyed at a blow; all the bulwarks of the kingdom fell into the enemy's hand, and only at the extreme points of the kingdom so much self-consciousness remained that the state fought for mere existence. The government tried to purchase peace at any price, in order to compensate for the loss of power and greatness by revival and encouragement of the inner strength of the nation. It endeavoured, before all, to acquire the means of effecting this internal improvement, which was to support the throne by means of all the talent, uprightness, and activity which might be pressed into the service. Humboldt watched these events anxiously, and patiently awaited their issues. When at last peace was proclaimed, the happy life he had till then led was embittered by the degradation of his country; even the possessions of individuals were endangered, and it seems that the castle of Tegel had also been plundered during these years; the aspect of affairs in the papal dominions grew more dangerous, and Humboldt determined to leave Rome and his family for some time, and repair to Germany on leave of absence. After having spent the autumn of 1808 in Albano, he left Rome in October, not foreseeing then that he would not return. He only took his son Theodor with him, probably

with the intention of placing him in some educational establishment.

On his return, he visited Goethe, and then repaired to his father-in-law, Herr von Dacheröden, in Erfurt. While there he received a summons to enter into another sphere. In December, 1808, the cabinet sitting in Königsberg offered him the post of director of the section of worship and of public education in the ministry of the interior, at the same time naming him a privy councillor of state. Humboldt declared himself willing to accept the post, reserving to himself the right to resume his diplomatic career whenever he wished, and his definite appointment was thereupon signed in Königsberg on the 20th February, 1809. He, however, had arrived in Berlin in January, 1809, where he spent a few months, before his departure to Königsberg. He placed his son in a Pestalozzian school, prepared to enter upon his official duties, and arrived in Königsberg in April.

Though it must have grieved him to quit such an agreeable life as his Roman one, his duty required it, and he did not hesitate to sacrifice his own predilections to the fatherland. He reserved the right to re-enter the diplomatic career, principally with a view to returning to Rome; but he had left his post there at the right time; for scarcely had he quitted the papal dominions than the long-feared catastrophe broke over it. On the 17th May, Napoleon decreed the incorporation of the States of the Church with the French empire, and on the 6th of July of the same year the Pope was led a prisoner from Rome.

CHAPTER VII.

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THE unfortunate year 1806 had placed Prussia in a most critical position. Its existence even for some time seemed endangered, and at all events there needed, to secure it, or to repair the past and prepare for a better future, a fundamental renovation of what had been saved. In the youthful history of Humboldt's life we mentioned the period of political and social demoralization which had succeeded the reign of the great Frederic. With Frederic William III., a better man came to the head of affairs, but this good prince, still surrounded by tools of the former reign, was not able to avoid the catastrophe the times threatened; and as it seemed to threaten under every circumstance, he anxiously sought to avoid every collision, and at every occasion for battle was led only by his peaceful tendencies, which at last produced the greater misfortune. But this misfortune effected good, for the heart of the people was good, and the prince noble. To produce this good, however, the whole former political tendencies had to be changed, the people strengthened by greater freedom, and the general character elevated.

The king, with these views, appointed an "immediate commission" in Memel, which was to provide means for the moment, and prepare the changes for the future. It was divided into two sections, one for the war department, the other for the interior. This commission laid the foundation for the new order of things, and, with lasting peace, needed only a power-

ful leader to effect these changes against the most threatening foreign combinations, and against the most violent opposition at home.

Such a man was found in the minister, Freiherr von Stein. He had lived in retirement on his estates during the war, and was now summoned to Memel by the king in October, 1807, and placed at the head of affairs. He was only allowed to remain at the head for one year, but this short period sufficed to make his ministry memorable. He began to introduce his new measures while in the most difficult position, and while Scharnhorst, the minister-of-war, was raising a new army. Politics assumed a more decisive German tendency, and Stein introduced changes which may indeed be called a revolution by constitutional means. The decree of the 9th October, 1807, repealed the laws of vassalage and feudality; on the 19th November, 1808, a constitution was announced, and on the 16th December, an edict was published which re-organized the entire state. At the same time the cleverest and most appropriate men were chosen to fill the various offices. Only character and abilities were required, and the most liberal, independent minds were admitted, thus opening the door to a constant progress.

But political changes alone were not sufficient. The necessity for purifying the state from below was also felt, and it was acknowledged that to effect this it was necessary not only to teach but to educate; to free the spirit, and awaken the character and independence of the young, and thus create worthy citizens for the state, capable of coping with the future destinies of the nation.

Two things seemed necessary to achieve this. The introduction of the Pestalozzian system of elementary instruction, and the erection of a great, new university, in place of the university of Halle, given up at the peace.

The more determinedly reforms were planned on the field of popular instruction, the more it was felt



that a man was required for this post who was himself penetrated by the intellectual genius of the nation, and thus capable of leading and inspiring the intellectual forces of the country—in short, one who could give an impulse to this branch of government, as Stein and Scharnhorst did to the others. And such a man was found in Humboldt.

The selection of Humboldt for this post cannot be enough praised, for one more fitted to direct on the wide field of popular instruction could scarcely be imagined. It has been asked whether he was equally fitted for the post of minister of public worship, and a word on this subject may not be out of place here.

No one can know anything of Humboldt, nor have glanced at any of his writings, who doubts whether religion was in him or not. It is, however, true that his religious opinions were a little removed from positive Christianity; whether it be that he objected to the outward form of Christianity, or that he feared to lose his intellectual freedom and independent nature by entire submission to it. He, on this point, very much resembled the great literary men of that period, and although it cannot be said that he was bound by the fetters of the eighteenth century, he must in this respect be acknowledged its faithful pupil. Humboldt's characteristic motto was "All knowledge leads to God." But, in obedience to his own soul, he might have added, "All natural feeling also leads to Him." For although his being was so entirely intellectual, natural feeling was, withal, a marked feature of his character. None of the philosophical systems of the age was capable of entirely satisfying his requirements in this direction; and he was deterred from joining the subsequent developments of this science, as much by his just and natural mode of thought, as by the warmth of his heart, and the penetrating quality of his mind. He was not a mere theist, and not a pantheist. The belief in the existence of God, in an all-wise Providence, in the individual immortality of the soul, was firmly planted in

his heart, and was united in a peculiar manner, partly with the idea of fate of the ancients, and partly with such theosophic and philosophic views as many of the most thinking minds, from the oldest times, among Hindoos, Greeks, and Germans, have tried to fathom. His philosophy of history was also based on these views, and, indeed, the whole philosophical result of his reflections tended to this point. But he does not require all what he conceived in thought, faith, and imagination, to be philosophically proved, and, unlike the thinkers of his day, he takes refuge with his innermost feelings in the region of poetry, where the doubt of the moment finds equal expression with the boldest flight of thought.

He was indifferent to dogmas, but not hostile to them. He avoided them with that awe which fears to profane holy things; and where he could not escape it, he treats it as an established fact, to which all submit, shirking any further explanation.

Such a man could not be out of place as the president of the ministry for public worship, as his office merely requires him to supervise the department, and guard the interests of the State, letting the spiritual authorities under him superintend the details. His sphere, his positive business, is public instruction; here he has not merely to watch, but to lead, and in regard to Humboldt's great and peculiarly appropriate qualities for this post, the question as to his fitness for the religious part of his duty may be answered in the affirmative.

The manner in which he fulfilled his duties left no doubt on the subject. As it was his principle to give full scope to the spirit of freedom, he seems to have made it his especial duty in no way to oppose the independent activity of Nicolovius, his colleague in the religious department, but to meet his wishes and demands as far as was in his power, when they were not diametrically opposed to his own views of expediency or liberality. Nicolovius has also gratefully acknowledged the assistance he received from Hum-

boldt, the chief of his department, although he expressly endeavoured "to re-animate the people to religious faith, and thus, in his department also, to commence a new order of things."

It may be considered inconsistent that Humboldt, who had in former times determinedly opposed the interference of the state with the education of its subjects, should now with such zeal labour, not only to effect a reform in instruction, but that education as well as instruction be bestowed on the poorer classes. This is indeed a concession which the theoretician made to practical life. His theory of uncontrolled individual development could not be maintained in face of the requirements of reality of the German national life, and of such a time when it was of the utmost necessity to educate the people in a certain direction. But nevertheless his ruling principle, which he had only modified, not abandoned, exercised a beneficial influence. Firstly, he ever kept sight of the individual development as the grand aim, and the more he had to do with those already advanced, the more he left them at liberty to follow the bent of their inclinations. It is characteristic of this tendency, that at the very time when he was reforming the Prussian universities and founding a new splendid one, he published an injunction, on the 28th April, 1810, which unconditionally repealed the law forbidding Prussians to attend any foreign universities or high schools. And whenever it was possible, he acted in this sense, especially with regard to the men whom he had summoned to impart the sciences and higher branches of education. He endeavoured, not to lead them, but to allow them perfect freedom of action, so that he even, in the choice of new professors, submitted his judgment to that of Wolf and the scientific deputation, and only acted independently of them when they deserted him.

The department of public instruction had long needed such a reformer. Until the war it had been presided over by the Minister of Justice, von Masson,

a proud man, opposed to all reforms; and since the war, a perfect confusion and partial dissolution had ensued, and all were longing for assistance and for a thorough reform. Zelter writes to Goethe, on the 26th December, 1808: "We are expecting the Roman Humboldt here now; he has been appointed privy councillor and minister of worship, of instruction, and of the theatres. If he is still as he was before he went to Italy, I anticipate much from him. He can do much good at his post whichever way events may turn, for in this point, as in many others, we have long led a sinful life."

In April, 1809, Humboldt arrived in Königsberg, where the court and the officers of state still remained. Prussia was in a melancholy condition, for the pressure and importunity of Napoleon became more and more insufferable, even after the peace, and the pecuniary distress greater. The future existence of the state still seemed uncertain, and many doubted whether it might not be utterly destroyed in a week. But though affairs were thus in such a melancholy condition, Königsberg itself afforded a most consoling prospect. The best men in the state, full of pure zeal for the welfare of the fatherland, had here assembled, and in close communication with the royal family were preparing measures destined to save the country. Besides these men whom the times had brought together, Königsberg was, and had been, the residence of some of the most eminent philosophers of the day, whose presence had always exercised an elevating influence over the inhabitants of the town. Foremost among these was Kant, who had died a few years before the present period, and under whose tuition the other great men in the town had risen to eminence. Humboldt entered into more intimate acquaintance with Dr. William Motherby, an excellent man, the friend and pupil of Kant. He was a Scotchman by birth, but resided in Königsberg, where he formed a society in commemoration of the great philosopher. Humboldt, as an adherent of the Kantian

philosophy, soon became intimate with Motherby, and after his departure from Königsberg, remained in friendly correspondence with him. Professors Vater and Niebuhr came to Königsberg during Humboldt's stay, and it was here that he first met the great historian, Niebuhr, who writes home on the 28th of September, 1809: "I have only seen Humboldt, the chief of learning, once till now. His reception was extremely kind, and I anticipate much benefit from his society."

It was in Königsberg also where Humboldt entered into relations with the court. A man of such mind and such profound knowledge of the world, was a star even in the highest circles. He was honoured, not only as a great scholar, as an eminent statesman, but also as an unusually accomplished companion. The court was amused by his jokes, by his comic descriptions, and forgot the bitter troubles of the times whenever he indulged in his merry humour, and, comparing men to monkeys, forced them all to laughter. He became most intimate with the Princess Louisa, married to Prince Radziwil.

This was, on the whole, a time of harvest for Humboldt, and he had full opportunities for developing his practical talents. He found it easy not to abandon hope even on the brink of the precipice, and worked on with untiring zeal, convinced that an energetic and useful activity would always lead to favourable results. He sought to impart this feeling to others, and exclaimed to one of his despairing comrades, "The present is a great goddess, and is rarely coy to those who treat her with a certain cheerful courage."

While his official duties, and the social demands consequent thereon, occupied so much of his time and attention, he had nevertheless force of character sufficient to remain true to himself and his individual development. He always commenced his days with the study of Latin or Greek, and said at this period: "Without this, the parchments would spoil the man entirely."

Correspondence also occupied a great portion of his time. His family was in Italy, his brother in Paris. With Uhden, who had been his predecessor in the Roman embassy, he stood in official correspondence; he had, besides, an extensive official and private correspondence with many others, and especially with F. A. Wolf. His friendship for the latter induced him to place him in a prominent position in the educational department, to which Wolf's talents entitled him, but for which his aversion to move in circumscribed spheres, and his obstinate demands, soon made him unfit. Humboldt insisted on his great scientific worth to the ministers, and even to the monarch, and convinced them of the expediency of treating him cautiously and considerately, in order to keep his services for the state. He wrote to Wolf in June, 1809: "Think of your fame. Fame is a Sisyphus stone, which rolls back treacherously if one does not always advance it. Your calling is to produce great learned works; you are now so placed that you have sufficient time for them; your official duties are so arranged that you can easily fulfil them in your leisure moments. Commence some work, help us at your own convenience in our less important labours, and grant me now, as formerly, your affectionate confidence. But do not let it be said, that in fixing you in Berlin I make your talents useless for science." His efforts were, however, in vain. Wolf was not fitted for business activity, and his ambition was wounded by being placed in a subordinate situation. In March, 1810, when the section for sciences expected to commence their labours under Wolf's presidency, he suddenly resigned the office. He soon felt, especially after Humboldt had left his post in the government, how foolishly he had acted, and how kind his friend's intentions towards him had been. His respect for him increased more and more, and he lost no opportunity of showing it in the most solemn manner.

The first point to be achieved was a reform in popular education, or rather, the introduction of a

comprehensive system of national education. It was not sufficient that schools were opened, order and regularity introduced, and the position of instructors raised; for a true education and to attain what was required, a thorough revolution in elementary instruction was imperatively needed.

This reform was found in the views and method of Pestalozzi, a native of Switzerland, and a man possessing a deep insight into the life and requirements of the people, into the means of rousing it, and of educating it according to its natural powers and abilities. His system included all the elements of popular education, and his method was calculated, at the same time, to awake the reasoning faculties of the young, to form their character, and to strengthen the body and mind. Pestalozzi was eagerly employed in disseminating his views by books, and by the erection of model institutions in Switzerland. But few had at that time any mind for such things, least of all the governments. Such misfortunes as that of Jena had to come to make the soil fertile for such great reforms.

As soon as the necessity for a fundamental reform of national education was acknowledged in Prussia, it was determined to introduce the Pestalozzian method. Nicolovius entered into personal communication with Pestalozzi, young men were sent to his institution in Ifferten, and it was determined to arrange a normal institution in Königsberg on these principles.

So far had matters advanced when Humboldt was called to the head of affairs, and gave his unconditional support to the system. C. A. Zeller, a pupil of Pestalozzi, was summoned to superintend the founding of a normal school in Königsberg, and to teach the system to others, and arrived in September, 1809. Zeller fulfilled his mission with admirable skill and talent, and received a permanent appointment in Prussia, and yet the reform still met with opposition. The orphan establishment of Königsberg was to be the proposed pattern institution, but Zeller found it in a deplorable condition. The authorities would not

give him sufficient opportunities for introducing his measures, until Zeller, disgusted, was on the point of returning whence he came. Then Humboldt represented to the highest authorities the injustice of their treatment in such strong terms, that all that Zeller required was immediately granted.

As the attacks on the new system still continued, the king at last determined to inspect the new institution himself, and to surprise Zeller with a visit some morning. The princess Louise Radziwil, however, sent him the intelligence that the king, the queen, and the whole ministry, would come to him the next morning. It was a decisive moment. The king remained from eight o'clock until one; he inspected the mode of life of the establishment, its system of tuition and education, its military, gymnastic, and technic studies, and was so gratified, that on the evening of the same day the fate of this reform was decided, and the king declared himself in its favour.

Humboldt took great personal interest in the forms of the elementary tuition, in the principle of letting children discover and afterwards teach everything themselves, and especially in the mode of teaching children to read, and giving them a knowledge of the language by letting them learn all the roots, terminations, and prefixes. He inquired how this division of the syllables had first suggested itself, and remarked that this system might be adopted in all languages, except the Chinese. It is evident that Humboldt immediately conceived the matter from its intellectual side, and in reference to universal and comparative philology.

It is a strange fact that the unmusical Humboldt frequently was present at the musical instruction which Zeller gave the children, and paid such great attention to it as if it especially interested him. He thought, perhaps, that he ought to try whether he could not learn what, according to a certain method, every child could learn.

Equal care was bestowed on the gymnasiums and



universities, and here Humboldt found the opportunity of showing his active universal mind in founding a real pattern university. His mind was filled by a high ideal, foreign to every low thought, and he was quite as averse to satisfying such demands of selfishness as those made by common statesmen, who consider high schools as mere training establishments for the public service, and use them as a means for forming the spirit of the nation according to their narrow-minded or arbitrary views. Humboldt, on the contrary, wished to free the mind from its fetters, and so little did he care to maintain the influence of the state over advanced studies, that, as we have already stated, he repealed the law forbidding students to visit foreign universities.

Two high schools had remained in Prussia after the peace—Königsberg and Frankfurt-on-the-Oder. The one in Königsberg was well reformed; an observatory was built, a number of new professorial chairs, such as the progress of science called for, were erected, eminent teachers, in the full vigour of manhood, were appointed, and the funds of the university considerably increased. Frankfurt was also not forgotten. The intention of removing this establishment to Breslau, and of uniting it with the theological institution there, was formed at this time, but not carried out until 1811. It was, however, not forgotten during Humboldt's period of office, as we see by a letter written by Professor David Schulz, who was appointed there. "Matters improve even with us, and something effective is being done for the academy. Herren von Humboldt and Süvern were here in person a short time ago. Several new professors have been appointed."

All this was effected during the greatest distress, when the government did not know how the necessary expenses were to be provided. And yet there was no parsimony in a branch which generally is the first to suffer retrenchment.

The most important work, however, is the foundation of the university of Berlin. The king gave his

assent to the project by an order in council, signed 4th September, 1807, which decreed that a universal institution for instruction should be erected in Berlin, in appropriate connexion with the academy of sciences. The ostensible motive for the new institution was the loss of the university of Halle, which had hitherto been the most important establishment of the kind in the monarchy. But the real reason was a deeper one. It was felt that the state, the nation, and the government, needed an intellectual impulsion, such as only a great institution of this kind, in the immediate vicinity of the highest authorities, could give. It was felt that this, which common minds would consider an unwarrantable luxury in such a time of distress, might prove the means of saving the state, and the government, therefore, did not shrink from the sacrifices which the execution of the plan demanded.

The matter had advanced so far when Humboldt was called to the post, and on him devolved the onerous duty of carrying out the plan. For scarcely had the first step been taken when the mode in which the plan should be executed was warmly discussed, and the place chosen for its erection met with great opposition. The prime minister, Freiherr von Stein, was even on the side of the opponents. To his idea the calmness of academic life was quite inconsonant with the bustle and diversions of a great capital, and with his usual impetuosity he declared the plan to be absurd. He feared especially the demoralization of the young students. F. A. Wolf, however, succeeded in representing to him that his fears were exaggerated, and in persuading the minister of the feasibility of the plan, who thereupon became as violent a partizan as he had been an opponent. Again the insufficient funds were advanced as an obstacle, but this objection was met, and justly, with the reply, that with small funds more could be achieved in the capital than anywhere else, as so many indispensable institutions and collections were already in existence there. A third objection was of more importance

and was even shared by William von Humboldt when he first heard of the plan. He could not deny the restraint and prosaic tone which the vicinity of the government and of the civic relations might create ; he feared to see the liberty of university life circumscribed, and did not think it advisable that the impetuous, ardent youths should be constrained by the formality of official life ; finally, he objected to the pressure which the immediate neighbourhood of the government might exercise over the noble freedom of the teacher and of learning.

Important grounds must have existed to conquer the aversion Humboldt felt for the shadow of undue control which might eventually be brought to bear upon the young university. One reason unquestionably was the hope that the government might be benefited by the contact with intelligence and the freshness of academic life, and that the communication between the chiefs of science and the higher members of the administration might have an elevating influence on the latter.

The mode of execution was the next consideration, and Humboldt invited the most eminent men of the day, Wolf, Fichte, Schleiermacher, and others, to assist him with their advice. The plans of Wolf seem to have been the most practical, those of Fichte and Schleiermacher were profound and learned, but more admirable in theory than practicable. Fichte also laid too much weight on the form where the spirit was required, and men with mind and the power to impart it.

Humboldt's plan was to assemble a galaxy of talent and science on one spot ; he wished all these powers to operate quite uncontrolledly, and expected more from this measure than from all exterior rules.

He does not seem to have been of the mind to change more than was urgently necessary in such well-established institutions as the German high schools. Here no thorough reform was needed, as in the elementary schools and in the gymnasiums. All that was required was an abundance of new strength, and

means to treat those summoned with a spirit of liberality. In a word, to do for this new institution in an appropriate manner, and on a larger scale, what Münchhausen had once done for Göttingen, and the Government of Weimar for Jena, and then success was certain.

As soon as Humboldt had reconciled himself to the idea of erecting the new university in Berlin,—and this seems to have been before his accession to office,—he was heart and soul in the cause, and on the 25th March, 1809, already his associate, Süttern, wrote from Königsberg to Professor Schütz, in Halle: "Herr von Humboldt is very much occupied with plans for the new Berlin university; it is now his favourite theme, and although nothing has hitherto been decided, there is a great probability, if the state only remains at peace, that the new institution will be founded.

Persuaded by Humboldt's representations, the king, by an order in council of the 16th August, 1809, gave his definite consent to the proposed undertaking. The new academy was to have the privilege of granting academic dignities; the academies of art and science, as well as all the scientific institutions and collections of the capital, were, under the immediate direction of the department of public instruction, to be combined with this new high school. An annual sum of 150,000 thalers (about 22,500*l.*) was granted for these institutions, and of this sum 60,000 thalers (9000*l.*) were to be devoted to the university. The king presented to them for a university house the splendid palace of Prince Henry, situated in a central position in the town. This liberality in granting the necessary funds was beyond all anticipation. It was the highest example of a real acknowledgment of the importance of science and knowledge which a state has ever yet given, for it was given during a most disastrous time, and during great financial distress, and was intended as a means for salvation and renovation.

The king had expressed his wish that the university might be opened in the autumn of 1810, and the exertions to complete all the arrangements were now, therefore, redoubled.

The court and the administration returned from Königsberg to Berlin in December, 1809. Humboldt was expected on his journey to visit Frankfurt-on-the-Oder on the 18th, but it is doubtful whether he did so; the king and queen made their entry into Berlin on the 23rd.

Before leaving Königsberg, Humboldt had requested leave of absence to repair to Thuringia, and arrange family matters. His father-in-law, Herr von Dächeroeden, had died in the course of the year. Frau von Humboldt was the sole heiress, as a brother she had, had died in 1806. The considerable inheritance which fell to her share consisted principally of the estates of Burgömer and Auleben, on which she had passed a great part of her youth, and the first years of her married life. The eldest son of this marriage received the royal permission to add the arms of the now extinct family name to his own.

On this journey Humboldt visited Goethe, in Weimar, and professor Reil, in Halle. The latter was a celebrated naturalist and physician, as well as a most enlightened and liberal-minded man, and was almost indispensable to such an undertaking as the new university. Humboldt, therefore, offered him an appointment in it, which he accepted, and soon afterwards removed from the Westphalian university to Berlin.

On the 26th January, 1810, Humboldt returned to Berlin. His family still remained in Italy. Soon after his departure from Rome, he was gladdened by the news of the birth of a son, who received the name of Hermann. He was the second of his sons who survived, and the youngest of his children. Frau von Humboldt lived alternately in Rome and Naples, and remained in constant intercourse with the artists who frequented the former city, even when, after the arrival of Cornelius and Overbeck, the romantic catholic tendencies prevailed. She wrote to a friend at this time: "I like them all, whether they are new or old catholics, if they are only good artists and good men. I must indeed count some catholic converts among

these good artists, but they became catholics in the spirit of love, and as artists, these catholics are among the best." She was expected in Berlin in the spring of 1810, but probably the change which then took place in her husband's position, delayed her return to Germany.

Immediately after Humboldt's return to Berlin, he made serious preparations for the arrangements of the new university, and Arnim the poet writes to Königsberg: "Humboldt has at last returned from his journey, and is making serious beginnings for the university, but unfortunately the ministry of finance is quite at variance with that of the interior."

In spite of these difficulties, Humboldt devoted his entire activity to this subject. The university was to be opened on the 1st October, and a number of important branches were yet unfilled; the various elements had still to be united to one whole; the collections and branch institutions had to be furnished with a sufficiency of means. When Humboldt, after a few months, quitted his post, the preparations were so far completed that nothing stood in the way of the opening at the appointed time.

All the eminent men belonging to Prussia were first elected for the new university; but if these did not suffice, professors were invited from other districts, and the universities which had been lost in the war contributed the best and most important names to the new establishment. Fichte, from Erlangen, was a host in himself. Halle sent several men, and formed, in more senses than one, the basis of the new university. All the important academic talent of Prussia was associated there. The archæological studies in their most extended views had taken root there, under Wolf's tuition. Beside Wolf stood Schleiermacher, the advocate of that national tendency which subsequently grew to such strength. These men, with Reil, a determined patriot, and Schmalz, at that time a man with untarnished reputation, introduced the healthy spirit which reigned in

Halle into the new creation. Another very important name was added to these: Niebuhr, who had been of great influence for some years in the financial department of the state, retired in disgust, and became a professor at the university.

With all these, and with the means used to induce the most eminent men in all branches of knowledge to repair to Berlin, it became possible to open the university with men of great, of the first eminence in all faculties. Fichte taught philosophy; Schleiermacher, De Wette, and Marheinecke, theology; jurisprudence was taught by Savigny and Schmalz; the medical faculty included Friedländer, Kohlransch, Hufeland, and Reil. The department of natural sciences, of physics, and chemistry, was filled by Klaproth, Hermstädt, Illiger, and Erman; that of mathematics by Tralles. The historians were Niebuhr and Rühls; the archæologists, F. A. Wolf, Spalding, Heindorf, Buttmann, and Böckh, and the comparative philologist, Bernhardi. Hirt lectured on plastic art. The study of old German was introduced as an important addition, by Von der Hagen's lectures on the Nibelungen Lied. These and other names were contained in the first lists, published in September, 1810, and some were still absent, though engaged for the university, such as Willdenow, the celebrated botanist, and J. Bekker, the critical grammarian.

This commencement has always been admired; but of late years a reproach has been cast on it, which deserves mention here, as it was in fact directed against Humboldt, and by a man who, on other occasions, speaks only with enthusiasm of the university. This man is Steffens, who complains that the professors of the new philosophies were excluded. He says: "The most distinguished scholars were summoned, and all willingly obeyed the call. Only in the realms of speculation confusion reigned. At first it was intended to introduce a philosophical chaos into it, which seems a great contrast to the subsequently-introduced severe school. The importance

of speculation in German education was felt, but not acknowledged, and especially natural philosophy was scurvily treated. The most that was permitted was the introduction of a few Kantish doctrines. William von Humboldt thought that none of the philosophic systems of that period could claim any consideration. He thought that young clever men might emulate with each other as private lecturers, and that the prize could then be given to the victor. A professor of philosophy certainly was required, but then Fichte was there, and Schleiermacher, though a theologian, was a profound philosopher."

Berlin has certainly only lately become the chief seat of the new philosophy; it is perhaps also correct that Humboldt was not sufficiently just towards these studies, as he considered them in general to be retrogressive in their effects. But it may be questioned whether Schelling would not have been gladly welcomed, if he could have been induced to join the university, or if the contrast between him and Fichte had not been too great. Humboldt has at least highly praised Schelling's merits in improving the philosophic diction of the Germans, and he probably agreed with Schelling in many points of his philosophy, although he would have wished to have had it explained in a more natural manner, and with more critical ability. But if Steffens' reproach only means that it was very wrong not to give him an appointment at the university, it seems as if he were making himself the judge in his own cause. The majority of the thinking heads of Germany will certainly not blame Humboldt for being somewhat suspicious of the philosophy of a man in whom a profound contemplation of nature was indissolubly allied to a degree of mysticism highly dangerous to liberality of thought. Humboldt always remained consistent in this aversion, and not only opposed all Schleiermacher's influence in endeavouring to procure Steffens' appointment, but frequently expressed his regret at the intellectual errors of this otherwise clever thinker.



But if even Humboldt had been too suspicious against the modern school of speculation, it cannot be denied that his rule was, on the other hand, free from a fault to which the best directors of public instruction have always been addicted—namely, in unduly or exclusively favouring one philosophic system.

The endowment of the university was complete, not only with regard to its teachers: extensive collections had existed for some time in the capital, which were now given to the high school, or at least united with it. There was a considerable library, a botanic garden, a collection of anatomical preparations, and a quantity of other scientific collections, which were now increased and completed, and formed into a magnificent museum for natural history.

Thus everything necessary was arranged punctually to obey the royal mandate, but Humboldt resigned his office before the university was opened. The principal part of the work was, however, done, so that the rest might be completed by inferior hands. It is a characteristic feature in Humboldt's life, that he was not even present at the opening of this his creation. On the 29th of April, 1810, he expressed a wish to return to his diplomatic career, and in the middle of June his wish was fulfilled by his appointment to a post, in which such a man was urgently needed.

The reasons which induced Humboldt to resign such a congenial sphere of action are involved in mystery. It is certain that the ministry was in a very feeble position, and anticipated its dissolution daily. A certain vacillation pervaded all its measures, because the financial department was not based on a firm foundation. An arm to direct the whole firmly was much missed, and reports were repeatedly circulated that Dohna and the whole ministry had resigned. At last the king determined to summon Hardenberg to the head of affairs; Napoleon permitted it, and on the 6th of June, 1810, he entered upon his post. The lord chancellor Begme, the minister of finance Altenstein, and Sharnhorst, immediately resigned, the latter

only ostensibly, as he continued to work in the most complete unanimity with the chancellor. Count Dohna continued in his functions until November of this year. With Hardenberg's accession to office, unanimity and firmness were introduced into business. The financial difficulties were obviated, so that the reforms at home could be effected with more security, and the state became more dignified in its foreign relations.

This was the crisis which followed immediately after Humboldt's request to return to his diplomatic career, and in it must be sought his reasons for taking the step. The critical situation of the ministry could not interfere with his labours, and its fall would have cleared away many of the difficulties which beset his path. But those differences had commenced before the fall of the ministry had been determined, and it may be that they had been caused by the interference of the minister of finance in Humboldt's department.

However this may be, the dissolution of the cabinet did not change his resolution. Scarcely had the new prime minister, Hardenberg, taken the reins of government, than Humboldt's wish was granted, and he was, on the 14th July, appointed ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary at the Austrian court, and the title of a privy minister of state was bestowed on him. Besides the importance of this post under the circumstances of those times, there could not, as the Roman embassy remained vacant, be a more agreeable post than this.

Though Humboldt must have regretted leaving his situation, and even Berlin, in such an intellectually excited period, the thought might have consoled him, that he would now have more opportunity for cultivating his scientific studies, without neglecting the requirements of his fatherland, which had been impossible during the period he filled the office of minister of instruction.

Nicolovius was appointed provisionally to superintend the direction of that department. The news of

Humboldt's departure excited the fear that these affairs would be quite neglected, and that the opening of the university would be delayed. But they were groundless. The impulse had been given, and the plans for the university so far prepared, that it was easy for Nicolovius, in conjunction with the still acting Count Dohna, to complete the measures. The state chancellor offered the post to Alexander von Humboldt, then residing in Paris, but he preferred to devote himself to his scientific labours, and declined the proposal. In November, 1810, councillor Schuckman succeeded to the post, and Nicolovius was appointed director in both departments.

The virtues which Humboldt had shown as a statesman, his advanced views, his incorruptible love of truth, and his energetic activity, were amply appreciated by the court; the best acknowledgment was the Vienna appointment. He, however, received several other tokens of royal esteem. When the 2nd and 3rd classes of the order of the Red Eagle were founded, in January, 1810, the third being first distributed, Humboldt was one of the few statesmen decorated with it.

His scientific greatness was also more and more acknowledged. In the beginning of the year 1809, he was elected foreign member of the Danish association for science, and in the summer of 1810, he was appointed member of the philosophical class of the royal academy of sciences in Berlin.

## CHAPTER VIII.

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HUMBOLDT left Berlin in the beginning of September, and on the way spent two days at Tögulitz, with Gentz, who occupied an important position in the Austrian cabinet. He arrived in Vienna in the middle of October, and had an audience of the emperor, in which he presented his credentials, on the 3rd of November:

Metternich had been placed at the head of the ministry for foreign affairs after the last peace. He there developed that snakelike cunning which so soon helped to effect Napoleon's ruin, and which, at least as regards this western enemy, has been of such advantage to Austria. These were the first years of this celebrated statesman's activity, which were evidently the most important in his life, and in which he showed talents which even his bitterest enemies cannot deny. Metternich was clever enough to esteem a William von Humboldt, and although their views and opinions in general were diametrically opposed, they were outweighed by the immediate objects of the day. If to this is added the charm of finding a worthy opponent, the importance they had for each other and their present intentions, it can be easily understood, that personally a very good understanding reigned between them. An evidence of this is given in a letter written by Gentz at this period, in which he says, that in the evening he is never disengaged, because his chief, Metternich, is a great nightbird, and does not dismiss those who are with him in the evening until one or two o'clock ; that he had been obliged to roam about

the evening before until half-past one, on the badly paved streets of Prague, with Metternich and Humboldt.

But when the great object for which so many different persons had met here had been achieved, the difference between Metternich and Humboldt became more apparent. It may, probably, have been prudence on the part of the latter not to make himself suspected before. At the congress of Vienna, he was, probably, often in their way, and it is certain that Metternich and Gentz did their utmost to obtain the subsequent dismissal of William von Humboldt.

Gentz had not seen Humboldt for ten years, and wrote to a friend at this period that all his awe for Humboldt's superiority, all intimidation, had vanished, that he was nothing now but an agreeable companion. He does not seem to have understood why Humboldt did not let him feel his superiority, when it would have so much injured the purpose he came to effect. In 1814 this superiority was again very evident, and although Humboldt cultivated his acquaintance, nor deserted the friend when he had grown old, still an intimate friendship between them was impossible after 1813.

In Vienna Humboldt was again united to his wife and children. Madame von Humboldt left Rome in the autumn of 1810. The residence on this side of the Alps did not seem to please her so much, nor could her health bear the climate of Vienna. If we add to this her longing for the beloved Rome, we need not wonder that she never felt at home in Vienna.

Humboldt's house was in Vienna, as it had been in Rome, thrown open with the most liberal hospitality, and again the highest in the social and intellectual world crowded Madame von Humboldt's saloons. Among the foreign diplomatists, the Danish ambassador, Christian, Count Bernstorff, an amiable talented man, was a welcome guest, and Humboldt remained equally his friend when a post was assigned to him which would have been with more justice bestowed

on Humboldt. We have already mentioned the chief persons of the Austrian cabinet, Metternich and Gentz. Franz Schlegel was now, also, in the Austrian service, and lived in Vienna with his talented wife, occupied in literary activity. With Arnsteins and Caroline Pichler the Humboldts also associated. But the chief of all the visitors was Alexander von Humboldt. Scarcely had he published the first portion of his descriptions, when he was already planning a second great undertaking to central Asia and Thibet, and repaired to Vienna in November, 1811, to take leave of his family. The plan was, however, not then executed, and Alexander returned to Paris, where he was busy for several years with the publication of his works. Another honoured guest was the Prussian Rittmeister, von Hedemann, a clever officer and adjutant of the Prince William of Prussia; he subsequently became Humboldt's son-in-law.

In Vienna Humboldt also found some leisure for his favourite pursuits, and returned with redoubled ardour to his philological studies, which he extended more and more. He determined now to publish his Basque studies. He was induced to do this by Professor Vater, in Königsberg, who had requested him to furnish an essay on the Basque languages as an appendix to his "Mithridates." Humboldt acceded to this proposal, and at the same time determined to treat the subject in a more extended form.

But the events of the day soon tore Humboldt from works of this kind, and with restless activity he obeyed all the claims which his important official position made upon him. At the time when the storm lowered which spent itself in the Russian campaign, Prussia's fate was at a crisis. It concluded the alliance with Napoleon with more repugnance than Austria. But although it publicly obeyed the will of the mighty one, it secretly prepared for the approaching definite struggle, especially by an alliance with Austria. It may be assumed that the foundation of the great European alliance, and of the union of the

two great German powers, was laid towards the end of 1811, or the beginning of 1812. It is said that the first and most important steps between the two nations were made by the monarchs themselves, and that only through the hands of their most confidential advisers. But the work must have been more easily effected when a man like Humboldt had laid the preliminaries. The king came from Berlin to Prague, and proceeded to the baths of Töplitz in June, 1812. The presence of his monarch in the capital of Bohemia brought Humboldt thither. Immediately afterwards he obtained leave of absence, and visited his Thuringian possessions, probably only as a feint. He arrived in Berlin in August, and returned from thence, no doubt furnished with the most important instructions, to his post at Vienna.

More quickly than had been anticipated, and under more fortunate auspices, came the great day of liberation. The catastrophe in Russia, the departure of the king from Berlin to Breslau, the junction of the Prussians and Russians,—these news succeeded each other like lightning flashes. The advocates of resistance now stood forward supreme, a well-regulated complete force, whom the government had to emulate in energy and activity, if they would not lose their authority. The ambassador at the court of Vienna was accurately informed of all that passed at home. Theodor Körner, who was in Vienna, wrote to a friend in Dresden, in February, 1813: "You may imagine that my soles burn since the address of the King of Prussia to the volunteers has reached me. Through the Prussian ambassador here, Herr von Humboldt, I am accurately informed of the popular feeling in Prussia, and of all that is being done in Breslau." In March the Prussian landwehr was summoned, the king issued an address to his people, and the formal declaration of war was made; the struggle commenced on the plains of Saxony, even before Austria had declared itself, or thrown its influence in the scale.

It was determined in Vienna that now a balance of power and a secure condition must be attained by treaties or by force. But Austria, always slow, needed time to prepare itself. This delay was painful, and Napoleon's genius showed plainly at the first blow how fatal a singlehanded struggle would be. It was now necessary, therefore, to soothe all doubts in Vienna, to give political and military securities, and overcome all hesitation and delays. What a field for a Humboldt—for his intellect and his activity! In opinions they were agreed, but the leader of the Austrian cabinet would not be hurried; he was waiting for the time when, supported by a well-equipped army, he could be sure to give a decisive blow. In the meantime he threw his net so skilfully round his opponent, that he was caught in it and fell.

The dallying politics of Austria in 1813 have frequently, and not quite unjustly, been censured. But they were the chief means of confusing and ruining Napoleon. He treated verbally and by correspondence with Metternich, who acted as mediator between the antagonist parties, and could not be spared. It was only because he hoped to secure Austria's alliance that Napoleon made a truce with Prussia and Russia, accepted Austria's mediation and the peace congress of Prague, and left all his enemies time to unite and to strengthen their forces. Then the union with Austria was definitively cemented, and Prussia and Russia combined with the money-giving England. Humboldt proceeded, in the beginning of the month, to the head-quarters of the allied powers, and thence to Ratiborwitz, a palace of the Duchess of Sagan, near Gitschin, which, since the 4th of June, had been the seat of the most important conferences. Gentz wrote to a friend in Prague, from Ratiborwitz, on the 23rd of June: "You know that now by a chance unequalled in history, four of the first sovereigns in Europe, (with the exception of Napoleon!) with their cabinets, ministers, courts, and six to eight hundred thousand men, are concentrated on a narrow strip of



land, about twenty (German) miles long and ten miles broad. In Gitschin, six hours' distance from here, are the emperor and count Metternich; in Opotschna, three hours' distance, the emperor Alexander and his two sisters stayed about a week. I was there two days, and saw the king of Prussia, who dined with the emperor. Humboldt was with me. To-day the emperor has dined here with us in Ratiborwitz with the duchess, and now returns to Reichenbach. I have seen him often. Ratiborwitz is the central point of meeting; here, all last week, Metternich, Stadion, and Hardenberg were, together and separately. Great things have been determined. Humboldt came with Hardenberg, has fixed himself here, and will remain till the further plans are arranged."

The point where these plans were determined was Prague, where the peace congress was appointed to meet on the 5th July, while the allied powers were debating the plan of the campaign.

The confidence which was reposed in Humboldt, when he was sent by Prussia as plenipotentiary to the peace congress in Prague, and the share he subsequently took in all the debates, proves how well he understood to treat the cunning policy of the Viennese cabinet, and to urge it on without offending it. Russia sent Herr von Austeth, and Napoleon, the Duke de Vicenza and the Count de Narbonne, to treat in Prague; and Count Metternich represented the mediating power. The meeting in Prague was deferred till the 12th July, on which day Humboldt arrived there. Herr von Austeth and the Count de Narbonne were there also, but the latter would not act alone, and the Duke de Vicenza did not arrive till the 28th. As the French envoys immediately began to disagree about the form even of the negotiations, the allied powers were no doubt right in distrusting the French emperor's intentions with regard to the peace. The mediating minister proposed the formalities of the congress of Teschen, where the discussions were only carried on by writing, and through the

mediating power. The envoys of the allies consented to this, doubtless because they wished to have everything in a written form; Humboldt, because it agreed with his instructions. But the French plenipotentiaries demanded verbal and written communications, and complained bitterly that they had not even seen their opposed ambassadors. Hereupon a number of notes were exchanged with the Austrian minister on both sides; the truce expired before the question of these formalities had been settled. On the 10th August, Humboldt and Austeth declared that their authority as plenipotentiaries had expired.

On the 11th August, Humboldt left Prague. He went to Vienna to arrange his affairs and take leave of his family, from whom the expected events would separate him for some time. He was now expected in the head-quarters of the allied powers, where he was to take part in the direction of affairs, in conjunction with Baron Hardenberg.

This separation even had its pleasures, for all the members of the family emulated with each other in doing their utmost for the fatherland. Humboldt's eldest son, Theodor, a youth of seventeen, had interrupted his studies to fight under Prussia's flag. He entered the horse guards as a volunteer, was at Dresden and Culm, and fought in the storming of Montmartre. Madame von Humboldt also showed her interest for the great events of the day as far as she was able. She remained in Vienna till the spring of 1814. But as soon as the peace was concluded and her failing health permitted it, she removed with her children to Switzerland.

Humboldt was in Prague, on his way to head-quarters, on the 1st September, 1813. He found the monarchs and their ministers in Töplitz engaged in concluding treaties with their new allies. Day after day the arms of the allied armies were more successful. The battles of Kotzbach, of Culm, of Dennewitz, humbled the power of the common enemy; then from three sides the armies approached the town

in which the decisive battle was to be fought. Napoleon, however, retreated across the Rhine, and Germany was freed from her subjection.

After the battle of Leipzig, Humboldt paid a visit to Goethe, in Weimar, where Metternich and Hardenberg had also repaired. Frankfort on the Maine remained the head-quarters until the end of the year. Humboldt's office was, during this time, to conclude treaties with the smaller German states, such as Bavaria, and partly also with Wurtemberg. While the war was still continuing, another peace congress was to be held at Chatillon on the Seine, and Humboldt was deputed to act in it again as Prussian representative.

The French plenipotentiary at the peace congress was the Duke de Vicenza, and on the side of the allied, although the foreign ministers Metternich, Nesselrode, and Hardenberg were at head-quarters, and Castlereagh was expected, it was determined that not they, but the diplomatists nearest them in position and influence, should fill this post. But these diplomatists received such decided and consistent instructions, that they had nothing to do but conscientiously to act upon them.

Austria still wished to spare Napoleon, but hinted plainly that it would soon no longer be able to do so. On the 9th February, the ambassadors of the allied powers arrived in Chatillon. Austria was represented by Count Stadiou, Russia by Count Rasumoffsky, England by Lord Aberdeen, Earl Cathcart, and Lieutenant-General Stewart, Prussia by Humboldt, who watched the interests of his country with his customary industry and zeal. The communications which passed between him and Hardenberg, as minister, were only sent through the safest couriers, officers or mounted guards, and were always written by his own hand.

On the 4th February, the ambassadors paid each other the customary visits, and on the 5th the conferences commenced. The plenipotentiaries of the

allied powers declared at once that they only acted in concert in the name of Europe, and in meetings which were to be reported. On the 6th, already the French ambassador complained that it was evident the four deputies, counting the three English as one, had received the same instructions, and that they did not say a word without having first all agreed to it; and this was indeed the case. After prolonged debates, in which the terms demanded by the French varied with the fortune of the war, the congress was broken up on the 15th March, without having come to any result.

But Napoleon's day had come. The courage of the Silesian army and the union of the various forces, opened the way to Paris. Napoleon was defeated, the Bourbons returned, and on the 31st March the Emperor Alexander and Frederic William entered Paris. Their ministers and diplomatists followed them on the 7th and 8th April.

Paris was not new to Humboldt; he found old friends among Frenchmen and Germans. There was the Count Schlabrendorf, Oelsmer, A. W. Schlegel, Madame de Staël, B. Constant, and many others; but above all, his beloved brother, whose society must have afforded him much delight, although the king claimed him frequently as a guide. He also made many new friends here, and became acquainted with most of the political greatneses of the day, such as Count Münster, Lord Castlereagh, and from this time dates his friendship with the two celebrated Prussian generals, Gneisenau and Blücher.

He was soon, however, wanted for business, and first to take part in the conferences for the first Paris peace. The preliminaries only were settled here, and a congress appointed to take place in Vienna, when the whole would be definitively arranged. When the Paris conferences were over, the Prince Regent of England invited the monarchs and their courts to visit England. Humboldt accompanied his king, and was received with distinction by the Regent. They re-

mained in England three weeks, and then Humboldt accompanied his king to Switzerland, where he joined his wife and family. Madame von Humboldt determined now to proceed to Berlin with her family, to escape the commotion of the congress; Humboldt, however, proceeded to Vienna, where the congress was to assemble on the 1st October.

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The history of this congress has been so meagrely given in a few contemporary works, and the official reports are so confined to generalities, that it is difficult to describe Humboldt's activity there, although, from his position as ambassador to the Austrian court, and as the most talented of the three Prussian representatives, Hardenberg and Von Stein being the two others, it must have been considerable. He seems to have agreed very well with Hardenberg here, in the difficult position he was placed in as regarded the Prussian state chancellor, although it may be supposed that some differences must have arisen between them. Else, we should have to suspect Hardenberg of mere jealousy and envy of Humboldt's talents, in subsequently effecting his rival's dismissal.

Humboldt's knowledge, his reasoning power, and his skill, were everywhere admired, and all documents existing from that time give abundant proof of the respect in which he was held. The "*Rheinische Merkur*," in an article on the congress, 12th January, 1815, says: "The minister Humboldt is clever, and knows much. Many miss the heartiness in his manner which Germans like to see in their countrymen, but he is, nevertheless, a great light. The last plans for a German constitution are said to be by him, and he supports them warmly; and, of all there, he is best able to meet the Frenchmen in their underhand dealings." Another article says: "The state chancellor, Hardenberg, is, as always, confiding, trusting, unsuspecting in his politics, and taking everything in a favourable light; but Humboldt is cold and clear as a

December sun." From all we can gather, it is evident that Talleyrand, Metternich, and Humboldt were the most prominent characters at the congress, and that Prussia found in him an extraordinary representative. And yet it may be doubted whether Humboldt found at this congress a sphere consonant with his wishes, on which his own being could have shown itself. The time was not made for it. A conservative age commenced in good and in evil, and the appropriate measures could rarely be carried. If we consider the opposition he met with in all suggestions for a fundamental reform, we must be surprised at what he has, nevertheless, been able to achieve for Germany.

Humboldt was not only one of the most eminent, but, fortunately, one of the most industrious members of the congress. He was a member of nearly all the committees. What Humboldt worked during the congress, and how carefully, thoroughly, and prudently, with what conscientiousness and perseverance, is almost incredible; he expected the same from his assistants and subordinates, among whom the most prominent was the Count de Flemming, the nephew of Hardenberg.

During the most laborious days of the congress, Humboldt was yet fresh and willing for scientific labours and for social intercourse; he corrected his able translation of Greek choruses, practised the Pestalozzian system on himself, made a few German verses every day, wrote many family letters, and besides all this, he kept a diary, in which he reported not only the great events of public life, but also the incidents of society, the anecdotes and adventures of the day. Unfortunately, as he himself says, he afterwards had the idea to burn the majority of his papers, and these among the number.

The congress commenced with difficulties and delays, and the conferences of the eight powers were deferred to the 1st November, and continued until the return of Napoleon from Elba. The boundaries of the different States of Germany, their privileges,

and authority, were determined, and although Humboldt laboured at all these matters with inexhaustible industry, his liberal policy was not always supported or successful.

Overwhelmed as he was with pressing affairs, he nevertheless found time to watch the excited life of the day, and accept many of the numerous invitations. He was, indeed, never seen on the Bastei, the regular promenade of the inhabitants of Vienna, where the whole fashionable world showed itself, but he was present at all the festivities which at that period rapidly succeeded each other; he was found in the saloons where single members of the great whole met, as in the saloons of the Countess Taxis, the chief point of meeting for eminent Prussians, the Frau von Arnstein, by birth a Prussian, &c. We find Humboldt at a ball in the imperial palace conversing with Dalberg and Wessenberg on the Polish-Saxon question; we find him at a pic-nic in the Augarten, which the celebrated Sidney Smith had planned, in lively conversation with the Count Rechberg. Count Rechberg was speaking with such literary enthusiasm of a work on Russia, that he forgot to attend to his master, the King of Bavaria, who was calling for his assistance in a dilemma. Gentz united the most distinguished company in his house. One met there the Duke of Weimar, Talleyrand, the Count and Countess Bernstorff, the beautiful Countess von Fuchs, Dr. Bollmann, celebrated for his attempt to liberate Lafayette from Olmütz, Rahel with her husband, and, of course, also Humboldt. It is told of a dinner at the Prince Chancellor's, at which Humboldt, Prince Radziwil, Stagemann, Grolmann, and Schöler, Von Bülow, Count Flemming, Bartholdy, Varnhagen, Rahel, &c., were present, that the gymnasiast, Jahn, also made his appearance there, coarse and dirty, and imparted his doctrines and rudenesses. Humboldt's anxiety to be introduced to Jahn induced the latter to begin his game with him also, but here he did not succeed; Humboldt's superior mind easily kept down the infe-

rior one, and Jahn remained standing at last, as if he did not know whether he had been fooled, or not.

Of former acquaintances, Humboldt met Cardinal Gonsalvi, who appeared as the pope's representative. Major von Hedemann also visited his future father-in-law during this period. The bookseller Cotta came, deputed by his colleagues; besides many other diplomatic and non-diplomatic persons.

Several adventures and anecdotes of Humboldt have also been handed down from this period, of which we only give the two most characteristic ones. The first was a serious one, namely, a duel, which had nearly stained the calm arena of the congress with blood, and which caused the more astonishment because the combatants were not two young hot-heads, but two sober, sedate men, both ministers of the same great power—Humboldt and the Prussian minister-of-war, Herr von Bogen. These men quarrelled, in consequence of an almost childish breach of etiquette, in which, however, Humboldt's wanton humour deserves some little censure. The minister had been invited to a conference of the five powers, to give some explanations regarding the approaching campaign. The matter had been settled, and other things were to be discussed, for which the presence of the minister seemed inappropriate. Instead of simply stating this to him, Humboldt led him out of the room under a reason which excited the military man's anger. Bogen demanded satisfaction, arms in hand, and Humboldt, whose courage never failed him, and whose presence of mind never deserted him, accepted the challenge with the most cheerful air in the world. The duel took place. No witnesses were present except Hardenberg, and the physician, Dr. Koreff. The combatants fought seriously and conscientiously, but it seemed as if both were invulnerable; and after two pistol shots on each side, they were reconciled. Many were amused at the very susceptible honour of the minister, Von Bogen, but all admired the calmness and chivalry, and the good humour of his adver-



sary, which was as constant in the field as at the conference.

The other adventure was less serious. The painter Isabey came to Vienna to commemorate the remarkable assembly by a painting. On the one half of the picture the crowned heads were assembled; on the other the diplomatic chiefs were sitting round the table at which the fate of Europe was decided. Each figure was a portrait; the artist chose the moment when Metternich introduces the Duke of Wellington. But one circumstance nearly frustrated the artist's intention. All the European representatives of importance were to figure on this picture, and among them Humboldt could not be wanting. But now Isabey was informed that here he would meet with opposition, as it was well-known how averse this statesman was to let himself be painted. He had refused it to the Princess Louise Radziwil, sister of Prince Ferdinand of Prussia. Isabey therefore went to Humboldt with very little hope. His embarrassment, real or feigned, increased the humour, now become proverbial, of the Prussian statesman, who, fixing his prominent large blue eyes upon him, replied thus: "Look at me, and confess that nature has endowed me with a too ugly face than that you could disapprove of my resolution never to spend a *sou* for my portrait. Say yourself, would not nature laugh at my expense, if she perceived such egregious folly in me? No; she shall see that I can appreciate the ill-favour she has bestowed upon me." The painter, surprised at this declaration, now gazed in astonishment at the irregular features of the minister; he, however, soon collected himself, and replied that it was not his intention to take any reward from his excellency for the agreeable task which he wished to undertake; he only came to ask from him the favour to sit for him a few hours. "If that is all," replied Humboldt, "with the greatest pleasure I will sit as often as you wish; do not make any ceremonies. I can only not give up my principle, not to go to the least expense

for my ugly face." Humboldt sat for the painter as often as he desired it; and when the picture was finished and engraved, the portrait of Humboldt was considered to be the most faithful; and he said frequently, "I have paid nothing for my portrait, and Isabey determined to revenge himself; he has made a speaking likeness."

When Napoleon's return was reported at Vienna, the most difficult questions had been decided, but the stoppage which had entered into the affairs continued. Then came the dreadful news which made so many tremble, but not Humboldt. He rejoiced at the turn, and exclaimed, "Excellent! now we shall have some life."

The treaties which had been formed were now confirmed, and all the powers prepared to check Napoleon's further progress. Humboldt's office was as important as before, and his name plays a conspicuous part in all histories of that period. After the signing of the Act of Alliance, all the plenipotentiaries hastened to head-quarters or to their courts. Humboldt, Wessenberg, and Clancarty, remained a week longer, busied in the last works of the congress, and then repaired to their destinations. Humboldt repaired first to Berlin. It had been determined that he should not return to Vienna, but that he should fill the post of ambassador to Paris.

On his journey home, Humboldt received the news of the victory of Waterloo. Scarcely arrived in Berlin, he was summoned to the peace congresses, and left for Paris a few days afterwards. There the king of Prussia, and the emperors of Austria and Russia, had also arrived; and now a commission of representatives of the allied powers was appointed, who were to fix the conditions of the peace with France. Humboldt and Hardenberg were again the representatives of Prussia.

Humboldt and Hardenberg endeavoured to regain all the dominions Prussia had lost in the war, and others which belonged more to Germany than to

France ; but their demands were not supported by Austria, and opposed by Russia and England, so that they were unsuccessful in this respect ; but it was not their fault that the expectations raised by this congress were not realized. As the details of this period have not yet been published; and the generalities are matters of history, we can only state that here, as in Vienna, Humboldt's activity was untiring, and that his patriotism excited the indignation of the French, who considered themselves aggrieved by his demands. Of the indemnification paid by France, Prussia and England received 25,000,000 francs in advance, 100,000,000 like the other powers, and 22,000,000 for the defence of the lower Rhine. The peace was signed on the 20th November, 1815: the French-Prussian document by Richelieu, Hardenberg, and Humboldt. On the same day, the other treaties were signed, one concerning the contributions, a second on the military occupation under the Duke of Wellington, and a third very comprehensive one, concerning reclamation from all parts of Europe.

This last treaty caused great trouble, and was only carried by Humboldt's perseverance and activity. It is owing to him that all the literary and artistic treasures carried away by Napoleon, from Italy, and various parts of Germany, were restored to their original owners ; and especially the university of Heidelberg owes to his exertions the restitution of very valuable and rare manuscripts and documents. W. Eken, in his "History of the Formation, Spoliation, and Destruction of the Heidelberg Libraries," says : "That our hope to regain these 850 valuable and singular manuscripts was fulfilled, is owing entirely to the zealous and patriotic assistance of his excellency the Prussian minister, William von Humboldt."

Humboldt had less time for social intercourse in Paris than he had had in Vienna. And the Prussians had less inclination for it, as the angry feeling against them was very high. But Humboldt associated with many who could separate intellectual and

scientific from political interest; among them was Madame de Staël. He had also his brother here, although the king frequently claimed the society of Alexander. For the last time he enjoyed here the exciting society of the Count Schlabrendorf, who could not resolve to quit Paris, although tempting proposals for returning to Berlin were made to him. Oelsner could not resist those which his old friend Humboldt made him in the name of the government, and which promised him a position in the ministry for foreign affairs. He proceeded to Frankfurt before the end of 1815, to await his further fate there. Here he met Humboldt and his family again, from whom he received constant proofs of kindness and attachment, even when his enemies attempted to calumniate him. When Oelsner had published two volumes of his great work, in 1817, he received a pension from government, with the permission to return to Paris. The time when such people were willingly appointed to official posts had already passed by.

We must here also mention the distinctions which Humboldt received during this time from his own king, and from other monarchs. In 1813, the king appointed him a knight of the order of the large red eagle; then he received the iron cross of the second, and the Russian St. Anne cross of the first class. Soon afterwards the great cross of the Imperial order of St. Leopold was conferred upon him. In 1815, he received the great crosses of the Danish Dannebrog order, of the order of merit of the Bavarian Crown, and the Baden home order of fidelity. And ultimately he received the highest honours of the war of liberation; Hardenberg and Humboldt were the only ones whom the king deemed worthy of the iron cross of the first class, with a white ribbon.

He was also one of the eminent men whom the Prussian state, after the termination of the second peace of Paris, presented with large estates. Blücher, Yorke, Bülow von Demewitz, Kleist von Nollendorf, Tranentzien and Gneisenau, Hardenberg and Hum-

boldt, and Knesebeck, were<sup>e</sup> endowed with them. The dotation granted to Humboldt was to amount to 5000 dollars of annual revenue, (about 750*l*.) and he was to choose the estate himself. He selected the castle and estate of Ohtmachan, in the district of Neisse. The estate had formerly belonged to the prince bishops of Breslau, but had lately been incorporated in the state. Now it was given to the Humboldt family, and, in time, produced about 8000 or 9000 dollars annually to the new possessors.

On the 25th November, a day later than Hardenberg, Humboldt left Paris. He overtook him, arrived in Frankfurt on the same day, and remained there while Hardenberg proceeded to Berlin. The other members of the territorial commission soon arrived at the place of their meetings; they were sent for this especial purpose, and were provided with assistants and subordinates. With Humboldt, were count Flemming, councillor Bois des Landes, and the attaché Freiherr von Bülow. The latter was soon acknowledged as talented, industrious and very useful, and under Humboldt's superintendence, developed his talents till he became a statesman, to whom the most important offices were entrusted, and who subsequently became minister for foreign affairs, and the son-in-law of William von Humboldt.

The business of the commission progressed very slowly, but there was excitement enough in Frankfurt to make the time pass agreeably. Prussian regiments marched back to their homes through this town. The venerable Blücher remained here some time, Stein and his family lived here the whole winter, and Gneisenau came on a visit in the spring. Besides this, the ambassadors to the next diet arrived, and among them were men who do not deserve to be blamed if the diet had not the beneficial consequences that were anticipated.

Frau von Humboldt, with her children, was still residing in Berlin. In 1815, the marriage of the second daughter with the Lieutenant-general von

Hedemann was solemnized. She left Berlin in May of the following year, and proceeded to Carlsbad, and from there joined her husband in Frankfurt.

Of the good humour in which Humboldt found himself at that time, especially after the arrival of his family, Rahel Levin, now Frau Varnhagen von Ense, speaks with great delight. She had gone to Frankfurt to visit her old friends. She writes to her husband:—"I dined yesterday at Humboldt's, and Humboldt has got quite a new skin of amiability. Yesterday it reached its climax. He alone ruled the conversation, but so gently and mildly, that his influence was only remarked because he allowed nothing stupid or stiff to gain ground. He has the same tone towards his family, towards guests, and children, constantly relates strikingly comic things, but not as in winter, from thorough *ennui*, and in its harsh colourings. He has the greatest, most childlike sincerity on all subjects, and this gives a truly cheerful grace to all his sayings and doings. It seems to me that he has more sense than ever. Or have I more? In the evening I found him the same at the Countess Custines'."

In Frankfurt, Humboldt had more leisure to devote to his favourite studies, and it was here that he prepared his "Agamemnon" definitively for the press. He wrote the introduction to it in February, 1816. This is in itself a considerable piece of work, important for its characteristic of Greek poetry, especially of tragedy, and of Æschylus in particular, and important also for its theory of the art of translation. Humboldt dedicated it to his wife, who had, from the first, joined him in these studies. The translation of "Agamemnon" was published in the spring of 1816, in Leipzig.

Scarcely any year had passed since 1804 that he had not corrected something in this work, and at the last moment it was considerably improved by being compared with a new edition of the Greek poet, which had been prepared by the philologist G. Herrman, in

Leipzig. This enabled Humboldt to correct his translation by the entirely corrected and revised text, and he acknowledges that without this assistance he should not have ventured to submit the work, the choruses especially, to the public.

Thus this work, commenced in 1796, was at last given to the world. It is considered a masterpiece to this day; and the most perfect specimen of a translation from *Æschylus*. A. W. Schlegel, the great master in the art of translation, acknowledged Humboldt as an equal and competent critic of his works, especially because he had fulfilled the difficult task in the art of characteristic imitation of *Æschylus*.

This translation was a great boon to all friends of classic poetry. Goethe writes of it:—"‘*Agamemnon*,’ translated by Humboldt, has just reached me, and afforded me the easy enjoyment of a piece I had always extravagantly admired."

During his stay in Frankfurt, the intelligence reached Humboldt that Count Goltz was to retain the post of French ambassador, and that he would receive another appointment. The French minister, the Duke de Richelieu, a much over-rated man, found Goltz more convenient than Humboldt, and had intrigued with Hardenberg to get rid of the latter. The ostensible reason was the share Humboldt had taken in the humiliating peace, and Richelieu asserted that it would wound the French national feeling to see him as ambassador in Paris.

But the truth was that the Duke feared the presence of so important a man. Hardenberg submitted, and offered the London embassy to Humboldt, who was surprised at Hardenberg's submission and Richelieu's demands. The hope of living half for the state and half for study, united with his family, in a climate which would suit his wife's health was too tempting easily to be given up, although in some respects he preferred the London post. It would not have been agreeable to seem responsible for the consequences of the restoration amid such a miserable state of affairs.

Humboldt therefore accepted the proposition, and thus Count Goltz, a more narrow-minded man than even Richelieu, retained the Parisian office.

But it was not the intention of the government to allow Humboldt to depart at once for London. The affairs in Frankfurt had first to be arranged to a certain point, and the chancellor thought no one more fitted for this business than the man who had arranged them in Vienna and Paris. Afterwards he was required in Berlin to debate the constitution and a comprehensive financial code of laws; and it was also generally anticipated in Berlin that he would be found indispensable in the higher spheres of home government, and that he would succeed to a post to which he had more right than any one else.

In Frankfurt, Humboldt had also to represent Prussia in the solemn opening of the diet, as the deputy to the diet. Count von der Goltz (not to be confounded with the French ambassador, Count Goltz), although he had arrived in Frankfurt, was ill, and could not appear in person. The day before, Humboldt had effected the omission of church ceremonies at the opening of the diet; for it was in bad taste to make arrangements which could not be generally shared, and only reminded of the unfortunate disunion of the nation. Therefore, only a solemn procession of the ambassadors took place, to the palace of the Prince of Thurn and Taxis, in which the session was to commence at eleven o'clock. The entire *personnel* of the embassies was present. The presiding ambassador, the Count Buol-Schauenstein, opened the meeting with a dignified speech, which showed as much consideration for the independence of the single members of the diet, as it proved the necessity of a firmer national alliance. Thereupon the other ambassadors replied, in longer and shorter speeches. Humboldt expressed the opinions and wishes of his king, alluding to the advantages which would arise from a universal and constant union of the Germans, from a union which should be at home and abroad, securing,



protecting, and conserving, and which would facilitate the common purposes of independent, self-relying, and equally-privileged states for the common-weal, by firmly-constituted legal forms and arrangements. The speaker then expressed the hope that this would secure the safety of single states and of the common fatherland, and that thereby all the privileges would be maintained and supported, by means of which Germany might calculate on the esteem of other European nations. Finally, he added some personal remarks. "For myself," he said, "I could not have hoped for a more agreeable or honourable task than to express these sentiments here on this day, and to belong, though temporarily, to an assembly to whom I devote my esteem, and the ardent endeavour to labour for the same purpose with all my strength, and whose favourable confidence I request." Then the credentials were all submitted, and other formalities gone through. This ended the meeting, which was followed by a grand dinner at the presiding ambassador's, where a brilliant company assembled in the evening. In the town, cannons and bells announced the important event.

On the 11th of November, the first meeting for the transaction of business took place, and in this the Count von der Goltz was able himself to take his seat. It is fortunate for Humboldt that he had no further share in these deliberations. The result could not have gratified him, and he would have been powerless to effect any good.

The labours of the territorial commission detained Humboldt in Frankfurt until January, 1817, and then they separated without having quite concluded the affairs.

On the 11th of January, Humboldt with his family left Frankfurt. He proceeded first to Weimar, where he visited Goethe, and thence went to his estate of Burgörner. In February they arrived in Berlin. But Humboldt was not destined to remain long with his family. His eldest daughter, Caroline, was in delicate

health, and had been advised to take sea-baths in Naples. Madame von Humboldt therefore determined to repair to Italy again, accompanied by her daughters and her son-in-law, Von Hedemann. She was also afraid of the "fog island" on which Humboldt was soon to reside. But to one member of the family, at least, this separation was doubly painful, namely, to the youngest daughter, Gabriele. She had been betrothed in Frankfurt to the young Baron Bülow. But Gabriele was very young, and Bulow was to commence his career before their marriage, and for the present accompany his future father-in-law to London as secretary of Legation.

In April, Madame von Humboldt started on her journey, and arrived in Rome on the 3rd of May. In summer she went to Naples, and returned to Rome in autumn. She deferred her departure from time to time, delighted with Italian life, and patronizing art and artists as before. Her own health forbade her to venture into the London climate, and she also awaited a turn in the career of her husband. On the 19th of October she wrote to a friend: "I shall remain here during the winter, and return to Berlin in summer, where I shall be present at Theodor's (her eldest son's) marriage. In August, I shall arrive in the 'isle of fogs.' I part from Rome as I would part from life." Her first station was the baths of Nocera, in the papal dominions. Then she again returned to Rome, and remained there until Humboldt seemed to have a firm position in Berlin, in the summer of 1817. She then returned home, and brought splendid works of art with her.

Humboldt remained in Berlin for some time, and here his first disagreement with the state-chancellor, Hardenberg, began. He was still on the best terms with him, and the king also gave him repeated signs of favour. It was at this period that he received the before-mentioned dotation for his services; and he was among those whom the king summoned to his new cabinet, as a sign of confidence. But this new

creation had scarcely entered into life, when it turned indirectly against its originator, Hardenberg; and it was Humboldt who led the attack, and gave it importance by his weighty name.

A great change had taken place in the condition of affairs during some years, and it seemed doubtful whether the chancellor could stand against them. The great merits of Hardenberg cannot be denied. He had courageously directed the government at a period of oppression; he had founded a free peasantry; had lessened the privileges of the aristocracy, and had created rights of humanity, without which civic rights would be nugatory. The war then interrupted his activity, and he again showed praiseworthy qualities in his direction of foreign politics, especially during the critical years of 1811 to 1813. Difficult as the times were, they favoured his liberal policy in many respects; the king supported him against his opponents, for the privileges of the crown were scarcely affected. But when the opposition increased, the chancellor's weakness became more prominent, especially his want of energy,—an indecision and hesitation which avoided letting matters come to a crisis,—a conceding and weak policy where he should have made a bold stand against his opponents. Vain of his position, he tried to keep it by any means; jealous of talents which might surpass him, he endeavoured to remove such talents from the affairs, or at least from their central point, while unworthy individuals frequently succeeded in gaining his favour, and with it power and influence. But he was especially wanting in manly force to lead the vessel of state much longer in troubled times. He liked to put a check on one minister by the presence of another, but they were soon too strong, and he was glad that by siding with the victorious party he could at least keep his position.

It was natural that a reaction should take place to a certain extent. The public spirit had become so mighty during the war, so many high-flown hopes

had been cherished, that the calm observer—especially one who knew Prussia's condition—could foresee the ebb which would follow the tide. But no one could suppose that the great movement would have such insignificant fruits, and all Germany anxiously watched a state which had shown itself so powerful, and had become more powerful by its new acquisitions on the Rhine.

To effect the reconstitution of Prussia, the king had summoned all his ministers and councillors. They were divided into several parties; the chief of the opposition—which consisted of the nobility, the absolutists, and all those who feared to lose by the changes in the constitution—was the Prince Wittgenstein, who enjoyed the confidence of the king in the highest degree. He was at the time minister of police, but subsequently accepted the post of minister to the palace, where his influence was a more secret one. The party of progress was divided into several different classes, but all demanded a bold, liberal, energetic government. First there were those who, with small confidence in constitutional arrangements, held in memory the traditions of Frederic the Great, united with those of the last war, who hated all reaction, and considered the freedom of the press as the best guardian of an otherwise uncontrolled government. The chief of this section was Gneisenau. Most of the generals belonged to it, and also Bismarck. Next to these men ranks the no less energetic party of Freiherr von Stein. But although its chief advanced its demands impetuously, those demands were in themselves undefined and vague. So much only is clear, that they wished measures to be taken in accordance with the spirit of the times, but their own measures were not always in accordance with this spirit. Görres represented a decidedly constitutional party, but his opinions savoured of the middle ages. Related to the two latter opinions in many respects, but with more political capacities, were men such as Niebuhr, Vincke, and others who were opposed to a manifold govern-

ment, who wished to circumscribe the power of the state, in the manner of the English constitution, and who, by self-government in the lower spheres, wished to develop the capacity for sharing the responsibilities of government of the higher ones. And, finally, there was Humboldt's party, which advocated the introduction of liberal principles, without exceeding the bounds of what was for the time possible or expedient for Prussia. They also wished to circumscribe the powers of the government, but they demanded guarantees for individual liberty, which is often as much tyrannized over by the corporate as by the state authority. They recognised the necessity of accustoming the citizen to take an independent share in political activity, and therefore demanded a representative constitution, by which the interest of the people in public life would be best formed and developed.

Between these parties—of which those on the one side wished to stop and retrograde, while those on the other demanded further advancement on the path which had led to their liberation—stood the state chancellor, personally inclined to favour the latter party, but wavering and hesitating, so as not to ruin his position with the others, and always ready to lean on the one if the other should grow too strong for him. In the meantime, the opposition gained ground, and Hardenberg gradually felt himself inclined to join them.

On the 30th March the council of state was solemnly opened, and the debates on the constitution commenced, which, however, did not then lead to a decided result. The second matter of debate, the finances, was treated much more vigorously. The minister of finance, Count von Bülow, a nephew of the state chancellor, had submitted the project of a law of taxation to the king, who submitted it for revision to a committee of the council of state, of which Humboldt was appointed president. The project, however, did not give satisfaction, and was much opposed. It seemed especially unsuitable to oppress

the people with the hated and oppressive consumption taxes. In this committee Humboldt showed his strength, and reported to the council of state on the subject, in a masterly speech, on the 2nd July. He showed, in liberal and bold terms, the faults of the falsely-favourable report which the minister had made on the Prussian finances, and pointed out the infeasibility of his project with great energy and vivacity. A great agitation then prevailed. Several members opposed him; he quietly listened to their objections, and replied to all in a speech which was somewhat longer than the first one. Nothing was effected, and Bülow's plan was defeated. But Humboldt's speech was received with unmitigated admiration, and friends and enemies alike acknowledged his great eloquence and his penetrating and bold treatment of his subject.

Hardenberg soon felt the consequences of this debate, and saw that his nephew could no longer retain his situation. He had to resign in December of the same year, and be satisfied with a post in the ministry of commerce, which was made for him. The relation between Hardenberg and Humboldt was much shaken by this event, and even the king seems to have been suspicious of the latter. But the public now looked upon Humboldt as the leader of the opposition, and the report was frequently circulated that the chancellor intended to retire from the administration. If he had at this period resigned his post in favour of Humboldt or Gneisenau, the two favourites of the public, he would have retired in the full glory of his reputation, and more energetic hands would have effected what his weaker ones failed to carry out.

In Berlin, Humboldt found his old friend Wolf again; Wolf, attacked by his students and his fellows, felt himself very uncomfortable in his position, and attached himself closer to Humboldt. Politically, he also took part for Humboldt, and many thought he had been left by him to watch the current of events. Some said, even, that Wolf communicated to Humboldt in the ancient Greek language, the most dan-

gerous and suspicious news, but this is certainly unfounded.

In July, Humboldt left Berlin, and made first a journey to Silesia, to choose the estates which were to form his dotation, then, in the beginning of August, he visited the state chancellor in Carlsbad, where he was recruiting his health. Although their connexion had been shaken by the late events, all was still apparently smooth, and the arrangement was here made that Humboldt should wait for the chancellor on the banks of the Rhine, to arrange the new estates with him.

But Humboldt had scarcely departed when Hardenberg regretted this arrangement, and sent Humboldt a despatch that his presence in London was urgently necessary, and that he was to proceed at once to his post. The chancellor would not keep a man near him who made such an impression, wherever he spoke or acted, and who had only just before given him such trouble in the state council. He therefore sent him this order, which could not easily be disregarded. Humboldt's friends, indeed, advised him, as the chancellor seemed unwilling to fulfil his promises regarding the ministry, to refuse London, and re-enter the council, as during his absence he would lose his influence, but Humboldt determined to go.

After spending a few weeks in Frankfurt, Humboldt proceeded to London in September. He went by way of Brussels, where he had an audience of the king, and remained a short time; and the London journals of the 8th October, 1817, announced that the new Prussian ambassador, Baron von Humboldt, had arrived in London, accompanied by his secretary of legation, Freiherr von Bülow. He waited on the prince regent on the 10th October, but had not a formal audience for the presentation of his credentials until the 5th December, as the death of the princess Charlotte, heiress presumptive to the throne, had placed the court and country in deep mourning.

The prince regent was very partial to Humboldt, and distinguished him by treating him with great cordiality. The London Courier of the 26th March, 1818, states: "On Saturday, the prince regent honoured a splendid dinner, given by the Prussian ambassador, Freiherr von Humboldt, by his presence. He declared his wish that the old English heartiness should reign at the table, and sang two songs himself after the cloth had been withdrawn."

In business, indeed, the old toryism reigned, and Castlereagh was still foreign minister. But the opposition was already powerful in the parliament, and the changes commenced which subsequently brought Canning to the head of affairs. The affairs to which Humboldt principally devoted his time in London, were the constituting measures against the Barbarys, in order to put a stop to piracy on the north coast of Africa. Then Humboldt signed a treaty for the extinction of the slave trade, promising that Prussia would support England's right of search, with the other powers of the continent. And, finally, Humboldt was active in the organization of the Prussian loan of 1818.

Shortly after his arrival in London, Humboldt determined soon to resign his post. His wife had written to him that her health would not allow her to reside in the damp climate of England, and such a separation, for any length of time, was insupportable to Humboldt. He therefore requested to be dismissed from his post in the spring of 1818.

But now the ingratitude towards him was plainly shown. In November of the former year, the ministry of worship and public instruction had been given to the Freiherr von Altenstein, and now, as if there were not a man in the country fitted for the post, a foreigner was summoned to fill the office of foreign minister. Every one had expected that this place would be given to the man who had served his country so faithfully and effectively in the most difficult times; and the chancellor had even promised



it to Humboldt. But the diplomatists disliked him. Russia would have been dissatisfied with his appointment ; for such a superior mind as Humboldt's could not have consented to a humiliating subjection to the autocrat. The post was therefore given to Count Bernstorff, until then Danish ambassador to the Prussian court.

This appointment caused a great sensation. Humboldt himself seemed irritated less by the occurrence than at the chancellor, who had really not acted fairly towards him, and the apologies and explanations of Hardenberg's friends even seemed lame. One of his supporters writes: "Public opinion had expected that William von Humboldt, and not Bernstorff, would be appointed to this post, and Humboldt's penetrating reason needs no praise. But he, in common with all men of great superiority of mind who have not the devotedness of heart which may be termed amiability, has the misfortune to be more feared than loved. No one likes to be detected in the secret recesses of his thoughts by another, and Humboldt's native penetration, heightened by the study of profound sciences, his talent for seeing through others, was intolerable to the so-called clever men. Great talents soon became intimate and friendly with him. If he was indeed superior to them in scientific knowledge, they liked to learn from him, and sunned themselves in the rays of his genius. It was, however, necessary to place a man of sense, frankness, and amiability, but of inferior talent, at the head of affairs which subject their leader to frequent personal intercourse with the clever people, the ambassadors ; and the position is not fitted for a man who has only mind, and nothing else." Freiherr von Stein wrote to Von Gagern on the same subject: "Bernstorff is an excellent man. I do not know what stand he will take with the king and the chancellor. Whether he has the strength to clear the Augean stables, remains to be seen. Humboldt excels him infinitely in mind and knowledge, and I admire the skill of the state

chancellor in keeping all talented great men out of office. The spirit of the Lord has deserted the old sinner, and His blessing has been taken from him, for nothing succeeds and nothing flourishes under his rule."

It seems that Humboldt, when he received the announcement of this appointment, at once resigned, and demanded his dismissal; for in August the report was circulated that Humboldt had sent in his request for a dismissal, and that he intended to retire. All these reports were, however, premature, as it seems that the consideration of Humboldt's grievances had been deferred to the great congress of kings and ministers which was to take place at Aix-la-Chapelle.

In September, Alexander visited his brother in London. He came from Paris and was proceeding to Aix, whither the king, who seemed to take increasing pleasure in his society, had summoned him. William was also summoned to be present, but did not leave until some weeks later than his brother. He did not return to London, and Freiherr von Bülow was at the head of affairs for several years.

From Aix, Humboldt proceeded to Frankfurt, where the former territorial commission again met and concluded their former labours. From Frankfurt, Humboldt proceeded to Berlin, where Hardenberg was obliged reluctantly to appoint him to the ministry of the interior, which was divided into two branches for the purpose. The Count von Witzleben, adjutant and confidant of the king, a liberal-minded man, wished for his presence to keep a check on Hardenberg, and used his influence with the king to procure the appointment. Humboldt was appointed minister of the interior, in conjunction with the minister Von Shuckmann, but their departments were divided; Humboldt was also named commissioner of the principality of Neuchâtel.

When Humboldt succeeded to the ministry, on the 12th August, 1818, the political horizon was darken-

ing all around. The reaction gained strength, and some very lamentable individual events had given a plausible colouring to their projects. The king even declared that every time was not the right time to make a change in the constitution of a state, and that he who had given the promise, kept to himself the right of appointing the period of its fulfilment. In this close atmosphere the catastrophe of the murder of Kotzebue made matters still worse. The universities were watched, suspicions and accusations arose on all sides, and men such as Arndt, Jahn, Welcker, Reimer, &c., were treated as conspirators.

Public opinion expected much from Humboldt's appointment, for he was considered the chief support of liberal opinions in Prussia. The hopes of the reformers and constitutionalists were all fixed on this talented advocate, who had only lately in London had the opportunity of gathering new experience on parliamentary institutions. Nor did he deceive these expectations as far as lay in his power. Ideas of liberty had early taken root in his mind, and he had conceived the idea of individual liberty with almost too little regard to the requirements of the real world, and especially of the Prussian nation and the present time. We have seen that he wrote on the subject of fixing the extent of influence of the state, and he advocated a freedom for the individual for which men are seldom fitted. The Germans especially were far from being able to dispense with the interference of the state to such a degree. But although insight in practical life soon taught him to adapt his views more narrowly to the wants of the people, he did not therefore give up the principle. His statesmanlike talent showed itself in that he, when he had to do with the reality, followed not only the bent of his own mind, but consulted also the wants and wishes of the majority of the educated men of his time and of his people; that he, penetrated by the feeling that there was something higher in the prevalent ideas of

any epoch, sought out these ideas, connected them with his own views and thoughts, and thus endeavoured to act with the universal spirit of progress.

It was his firm conviction that a people could only be strengthened and elevated by free institutions. He would have realized this conviction in the manner most consonant to his feelings, had not his practical mind prevented him. He therefore remained true to his principles, but studied more nearly the most urgent wants of the nation and the ruling tendencies of the age, which were directed to constitutional life, and the commingling of the people with the affairs of the state. That this was the ruling tendency of the age was shown by the opinions of his youthful and intelligent contemporaries; that it was the wish of the great majority, which at that time showed little inclination to exercise its voice in public affairs, was proved by the happy results which every agitation of the people from its centuries-long apathy had worked in its character.

And finally, he saw that this practical view would go hand in hand with his ideal one. The German nation is so unused to political independent action, that it can only be accustomed to it by, as it were, forcing it to occupy itself with practical interests. The universal interest is still the most exciting. It awakes the practical sense most easily, and step by step the power is formed of dispensing with the directing tutelage of the state. And the Germans need a strengthening of their sense for the common interest in a national point of view, or they will run the risk of being again oppressed by Romans or Cossacks at the next opportunity.

Humboldt asked nothing from a Prussian constitution which was impossible under the circumstances. He wished to found the commencement of constitutional life, and pave the way for further privileges which might easily be added. He did not wish Prussia to make a rash leap forwards, but to advance

steadily with whole, not half measures. The government was to acquire the means, by representative deputations, of knowing the wishes of the people.

It was not his opinion that a state could be built up by mere theories, and considered it a fortunate circumstance that the former history of Prussia contained so many examples which might be consulted, and so many elements which might be employed. In all respects Humboldt's recall to the ministry encouraged the brightest hopes, and it was known that he would not consent to a withholding of the promised constitution on paltry grounds. He devoted himself zealously to the work, and has immortalized his short career by these exertions, and by the events which so.

Among the occupations which employed William von Humboldt at this period, was the share which he was commissioned to take in the magnificent foundation of the new museum. The king, in May, 1829, appointed him the president of a commission which was to take charge of the interior arrangements in this new institution, a choice which was universally received with favour and approbation. In Berlin, it caused especial satisfaction, because it was believed that the honoured statesman would thereby be more induced to mix with the higher circles of society than it seemed probable he would do after his severe loss.

This commission consisted of the first artists and connoisseurs in Berlin, of Schinkel, the architect of the museum, of the sculptors Rauch and Tieck, the painter Wach, the councillor Hirt, and the subsequent director of the gallery of paintings, Dr. Waagen. With most of these men, Humboldt had been long acquainted, and was connected with some of them in the direction of the Art Union. He was on very

Carlsbad decrees disgusted him ; he declared them to be infamous, unnatural, and insulting to the nation, and did not hesitate violently to oppose the ministry. He united himself with the high chancellor Von Beyme, and, supported by the minister of war, Von Boyen, commenced an opposition to the ministry, which he continued perseveringly and systematically, and in which he violently attacked Hardenberg and Bernstorff for their share in the Carlsbad decrees.

In his first attack, he declared that a minister of state, a minister of foreign affairs, exceeded his powers if he ventured to promise to make Prussian subjects amenable to foreign legislatures. He demanded that the minister Bernstorff be impeached, and the whole measure be annulled, and proposed at the same time that such projects should in future always be first submitted to the ministry. This accusation was received very ungraciously by his majesty.

In the second attack, the point was treated politically, and the decrees declared to be inconsonant with the powers of the diet, and it was alleged that such measures gave the diet a power fatal to Prussia's independence, and therefore proposed the non-acceptance of these decrees by Prussia. This took place in October, 1819. The consequences only followed at the end of the year, which proves that they were preceded by some difficulties.

Such an attack was unprecedented in the annals of Prussia. It was feared that the whole ministry would be carried away by Humboldt's eloquence, if energetic steps were not taken. Hardenberg, therefore, coalesced with his former opponent the Prince von Wittgenstein, to oppose Humboldt. Wittgenstein proved to the chancellor that the opposition must be undermined. The whole nobility was excited ; the cabinets of Vienna and Petersburg, who only wished for the overthrow of the opposition, were not idle. The Prussians hated Humboldt especially. Austria was alarmed : a few more attacks like this one of

Humboldt against the Carlsbad decrees, and the great reactionary scheme would be destroyed.

An accidental circumstance facilitated their plans. The minister of war, Von Boyen, disgusted by several equally illiberal militia and military decrees, demanded his dismissal, which the king granted, and his example was followed some days after by Von Grolman, director of a department in the ministry of war.

The facility with which Boyen's dismissal had been effected, inspired the party with more courage. They told the king that nothing was gained as long as the most able and most talented of all remained in the ministry. It is said that the king hesitated, but Hardenberg and Wittgenstein insisted, and on the 31st of December, 1819, Humboldt and Beyme were dismissed. It may be said that they were thrust out of the ministry as dangerous. The ministerial pension of 6000 dollars was offered to Humboldt, but he refused it and retired to private life. Thus Humboldt's connexion with the court was entirely broken off. The king was deeply offended to find Humboldt, whom he had formerly met every evening in his palace, or that of the Princess Radziwil, in such violent opposition to his will. The people were indignant, although they could not vent their anger, and the French papers mentioned Humboldt's retirement, and that of the other men who had done so much for their country, as a great loss for Prussia.

The reaction had now conquered and showed herself boldly after the fall of the opposition. Hardenberg became the faithful servant of Metternich, and died with the reputation of having done much for the cause of despotism and retrogression.

Humboldt could retire with the consciousness of having done his utmost without having exceeded the bounds of loyal opposition. He willingly retired to private life, as he saw no means of working good on the field of politics. It has been said that he might have continued the struggle on another field, and boldly, but for this there was no room in Germany or

Prussia; Stein also could only vent his indignation in letters. Humboldt, however, did not cease to take the warmest interest in the progress of his fatherland, of humanity, and of freedom, and expressed his opinions on the questions of the day with frankness in private life.

He willingly retired from business, for he had to work on his own field before his death, and achieve greatness there. He carried no feeling of personal anger with him to his retirement, and associated subsequently with Bernstorff as with Stein. But it is remarkable to see the manner in which he subsequently judged of Hardenberg. Varnhagen von Ense, that well-known artist in biographical descriptions, had told him that he intended writing a life of the state chancellor. Humboldt expressed his pleasure that such a task should be assigned to such hands, and thus replied to Varnhagen's letter (7th May, 1830): "My feelings towards this man (Hardenberg) have always remained the same, even at the time when we were entirely opposed to each other, and I rejoice, therefore, that he will meet with a kind and considerate treatment at your hands, which he deserves. It may in truth be said of him, that if we consider the events of 1810 to 1816 as the progress of a drama, a poet could scarcely have formed a more appropriate character for introducing them into Prussia than his. I have frequently felt this, and trembled for the issue, at times when he seemed to be in great difficulties. But it is certainly true, that I would rather for myself have resigned all active share in this drama, that I might stand firmly above the events."

He, indeed, attached little importance to his own share in the drama, and to what had befallen him. His brother Alexander repeatedly requested him, shortly before his death, to dictate something on the history of his dismissal. His answer was always the expression of profound indifference for such insignificant circumstances, with which he did not consider it worth while to occupy himself.



## CHAPTER IX.

WE have now accompanied Humboldt to the end of his political course, and have arrived at the last stages of his life. We saw how readily he retired from the service of the state when his talents were no longer acceptable. He returned to private life, but he did not, therefore, cease to strive and to work. All the power and energy which he had so successfully displayed in the management of public affairs were now concentrated on science and art; his inquiring spirit penetrated to the deepest and slightest peculiarities of the manners, and especially the languages, of distant regions, and, with lucid spirit, sought their connexion with the history of human civilization. He ornamented his family seat of Tegel by the collection of magnificent works of art, and made it an intellectual temple, a cheerful asylum for his friends, an instructive means of study for himself. There the muses frequently inspired him, and he composed several minor poems. Content and calm, full of confidence in an eternal existence, he gently departed from the circle of his friends, ever memorable to all who knew him.

Little could be hoped for on the field of politics at that period; a pure character only incurred the danger of being soiled, and it had, besides, been frequently regretted that Humboldt had not leisure enough to continue those literary labours for which he had shown such great ability. He therefore devoted himself to a sphere where something great might yet be achieved, and something new and important be founded. He

did not, therefore, cease to take an interest in the affairs of his country or the progress of humanity; but his labours were all directed to science and art. He could, at the same time, live quite according to his taste, free from forms and demands which politics make, and could therefore display the amiable part of his character more plainly, and close the sphere of his life in cheerfully-calm domestic happiness.

And Humboldt did not turn his attention entirely from matters affecting practical life. In an essay "On the Duty of an Historian," he taught a dignified conception of universal history, and gave the sketches for historical philosophy, which, until then, had not existed. But he devoted himself principally to comparative studies, and to the philosophy of languages. He submitted the results of his inquiries gradually in various meetings to the Royal Academy of Sciences in Berlin. He comprehends whole quarters of the world, with their languages, in these studies, but fixes them at last on the island group of Polynesia, and on the combination of his investigations on the ultimate reasons and the universal nature of language, and has left the fruit of these reflections in three quarto volumes. But all this does not fill up the rich contents of the last years of his life. He is active for art in the most extended sense of the word, gives reviews of the coryphées of German literature, with whom he has been so long and so intimately connected. And finally, the poetical genius inspired him also. In a splendid series of sonnets, as in a diary, he recorded the serious and cheerful emotions and feelings of his last days.

These leisure years may be divided into two portions,—that preceding and succeeding the death of his wife. The first portion he devoted to a most extended study of languages, and the social and intellectual amusements of the town. He lived in Berlin during the winters, and the summer generally in Tegel, sometimes on his estate in Magdeburg, in Burgörner, or on his newly-acquired Silesian estates.

The last years of his life, however, he devoted to the chief purposes of his age, and retired (resembling the ancients in this also) to the solitude of country life, to his castle of Tegel, which he had made into a real palace of the muses.

Longing for domestic life principally had induced William von Humboldt to give up his post in London, and in the autumn of 1819 the family were again united. But now, when the burden of public affairs had been taken from him, he could enjoy this reunion, which he had not been able to do since the days in Rome. He devoted himself with increasing affection to his wife and children; and, indeed, the amiable part of his nature became more prominent, and the reserve melted away, behind which he had concealed his real self in the days of political activity. His wife had also satiated her love for the south; his children were grown up. Theodor, the eldest, was married; and now, when the war was over, he was to go and superintend the newly-acquired estates. The younger son, Herman, learned forestry after he was grown up, but subsequently undertook the management of the half of the estate of Ostmachan, and cultivated it with praiseworthy zeal. He was a quiet simple man, with agreeable manners, and remained unmarried. Carolino, the eldest daughter, also remained unmarried. She much resembled her father in character, and was, after little William's death, his favourite. She was learned in languages, and a serious, clever woman, with great depth of feeling, and some peculiarity of character. Adelheid, the second daughter, lived always near her parents, with her husband, Major von Hedemann, who was adjutant to Prince William, brother of the king. The youngest daughter, Gabriele, was betrothed to Freiherr von Bülow, who was, at the time of which we write, still *chargé d'affaires* in London.

They inhabited the first storey of a very large mansion in one of the finest streets in Berlin, paying, as Niebuhr mentions in some of his letters, a rental of

1500 thalers (225*l.*). In this house Madame von Humboldt died.

Here they again gathered round them all the intellect and art of the metropolis, not excluding the illustrious in station or politics. Princes of the royal house, the highest officers of state, the first lights of science at a period when Schleiermacher, Wolf, and Hegel, and subsequently Alexander von Humboldt, were the ornaments of the capital and the university—whither many rare and aspiring talents also flocked—all these met in the saloons of this hospitable house, to which the highest ornaments of the female sex lent attraction and brilliancy. And amidst this profusion of mind and talent, the grace of the lady of the house remained paramount; and that social talent which had made her so popular in Paris, Vienna, and Rome, combined, as it so rarely is, in so high and so well-balanced a degree, with intellect and even erudition.

And then Humboldt himself! The thinker, the learned man, the statesman who knew most of the countries of Europe from experience, and included the whole earth in his comprehensive studies; who to-day spoke sterling wisdom to a ruler of the states, and to-morrow investigated the newest revelations of science with the first scholar of the age; who at one moment revived the remembrances of his Jena days, at another related adventures and anecdotes of his political life, and then again gave a sketch of the happy days he had spent in Rome and in Albano: Humboldt! who possessed all the means of ruling over other minds, imposing dignity, flow of eloquence, and sharpness of satire and irony; who was possessed of an infinite cheerfulness, which was vented sometimes in joking humour, sometimes in amusing conversation, as if he looked at life only from its brightest side; who, as he had not concealed his ideal tendencies in the bustle of politics, now, when many thought him absorbed by the minutiae of philologic studies, poured forth a roaring flood of thought which had been cultivated by science, and revealed at the same time a

depth of feeling which no one had suspected in this apparently cold soul, and from his penetrating reason.

And while Humboldt enriched the intellectual life of the metropolis by his presence, he was also enabled to take a part in those intellectual, artistic, and social enjoyments, for which, among all German towns, Berlin was so eminent. Much of what was there united had been partly founded by his assistance, or raised by him to the eminence on which it stood. Take alone the university which he had founded ! He could already rejoice over the rich fruits of the harvest he had planted.

Towards the end of May, 1820, Madame von Humboldt went through Dresden to Toplitz, and thence to Burgörner. Her husband remained in Berlin a little longer. On the 29th of June, he delivered his first address in the Academy of Sciences in Berlin. He read an important treatise on "comparative philology as relating to the various stages of philologic development." When this essay was publicly read in the meeting, on the 3rd of August, in honour of the king's birthday, he had already departed, and Professor Buttman read it in his stead. During the same year, Humboldt was elected honorary member of the Society of Arts in Berlin.

The year 1821 commenced with a very agreeable event for the family ; Gabriele's betrothed, Freiherr von Bülow, returned from London, after having for two years managed the affairs of the embassy there. He now entered the ministry of foreign affairs as privy councillor of legation, and was particularly active in the department of commerce. On the 10th of January, his marriage with Humboldt's youngest daughter was celebrated. It must have been gratifying to all parties, that now, when he was intimately connected with the Humboldt family, he was able to spend some years in Berlin.

On the 12th April, 1821, Humboldt read an essay "On the Task of the Historian ;" and after this period he read a paper once at least every year to this scien-

tific society. He also published in the same year his long commenced work, "Investigations as to the original inhabitants of Spain, through the medium of the Basque language."

An unfortunate incident disturbed the peace of the family during this year. The brave son-in-law of Humboldt, Major von Hedemann, had a brother who had been very wild from his earliest youth. His eccentricity was unbounded, and caused much grief to his excellent family. He had served bravely in the war, and then been appointed as inspector of forests in Westphalia, without, however, giving up his eccentric course of life. In this mood he had the mad idea of exciting a riot in West Prussia to procure the long promised constitution, and to effect a change in the administration. When he had collected together a number of uneducated men, he went to work, not suspecting that he was already betrayed. The government allowed the riot to break out, and then seized Hedemann and his companions, and gave them over to the courts of law. The news of the rebellion arrived in the beginning of July, and caused a great sensation. Humboldt, who was in Ottmachan at the time, is said to have been much annoyed at the circumstance. How easily could his opponents make use of this fact, and connect it with his former opposition. But the king knew Humboldt too well to give any credit to such insinuations, and for his family's sake, treated the unfortunate Hedemann with great consideration. He was taken to the fortress of Grandeuze, but liberated, after a few years, and, it is said, reappointed to his former place.

On the 17th January, 1822, Humboldt read his treatise "On the origin of grammatical forms, and their influence on the progress of ideas," in the Academy of Sciences. In the summer of the same year he spent some time in Burgörner, where the Freiherr von Stein paid him a visit.

During the years 1822 and 1824, Humboldt built his new castle of Tegel. In place of the old hunting

seat in which he had spent his childhood, he erected a more splendid building, and made it a seat in which an art-loving mind could appropriately end his days. The inheritance became a new creation. In order suitably to retain an old turret built in the time of the great elector, he made a clever plan, according to which the four corners have turrets. The whole edifice retained an antique character. The interior of the castle was ornamented with the most select treasures of sculpture and painting by ancient and modern masters, which had been principally collected during the long residence in Rome. Humboldt wrote of his seat to Gentz, in May, 1827 :—"I have here erected a dwelling full of gypsum casts and marble statues which would afford you great pleasure. You knew the old house. Now you would wander among beautiful statues, of which, especially, those in my room do not suffer by a superabundance of costume."

He made Tegel a beautiful seat in other respects also. The gardens, which his father had planned, were now formed into a beautiful park, which Humboldt ornamented with monuments, and especially by the monument which he raised to his wife, and beneath which he also was buried.

Thus this spot, stamped by his genius and hallowed by the last few years of his life, has become, by the new castle and park, by classical mementoes of every kind, and by a select and excellently arranged artistic collection, one of the most interesting environs of the Prussian capital. During Humboldt's lifetime already Tegel was hospitably open to all visitors, and the inhabitants of Berlin did not fail to appreciate such a favour.

In the commencement of the year 1823, Humboldt saw his brother Alexander again. He had met the king of Prussia at the congress of Verona, and accompanied him on his journey through Italy. He now returned to Berlin with him, intending to remain some months, and then to repair to Paris again.

During this visit our Humboldt recommenced his

intercourse with the court. His intimacy with the crown prince had never been interrupted, and from that period the king paid an annual visit to his former minister in Tegel.

Humboldt's worth had been much acknowledged and remembered during the first months of the year 1823, and the public expected that he would be now selected as the leader of the state. The state chancellor, prince Hardenberg, had died at Genoa in December, 1822. Herr von Voss, who was appointed his successor, at that time enjoyed the perfect confidence of the king, and had entered into the active service of the state a few months previously. But Voss died on the 30th January, 1823, and the king was in great embarrassment whom he should select for the important post of prime minister. One man whom the king had in view, the field-marshal count Kleist von Nollendorf, died three weeks later than Voss. The embarrassment increased. A conversation has been communicated to us which the king at that time had with his most confidential counsellors, but as it is a verbal communication, we do not give implicit confidence to it. It is, however, in part, confirmed by documentary evidence.

The king gave an audience to the Prince Wittgenstein, General von Witzleben, and the councillor Albrecht. He spoke of the death of the minister Von Voss, and continued: "I have for some weeks considered how the post of Herr von Voss, whose death is greatly to be regretted, can be filled. Of all the persons whose position fits them for the post, the minister von Humboldt is the most capable, but he enjoys so little confidence abroad, that he can in no way be thought of. I have gone through the list of all my ministers, and have come to the conclusion that Count Lottum is the most appropriate. Now, tell me your opinion."

*Albrecht.*—"If your majesty cannot take the minister von Humboldt, I also believe that Count Lottum is the most appropriate."



Witzleben was silent, and his majesty said to him, "What think you?"

*Witzleben.*—"The minister Von Humboldt, is, in my opinion, the only one properly qualified; but if your majesty has not the entire confidence in him without which he could not fulfil the important duties of such a position, I would, at least, humbly suggest that he be made president of the council of state, and member of the ministry, and that Count Lottum be president of the ministry."

"No, that will not do," replied the king; "the two posts cannot be separated."

*Prince von Wittgenstein.*—"Count Lottum is a very sensible man, and has very conciliatory manners."

*The King.*—"But whether he will have the necessary energy to insist wherever it is requisite, is another question, and the only objection I feel to him."

*Prince Wittgenstein.*—"He certainly is weak."

*The King.*—"But I know of none other."

The king is then said to have enumerated all his ministers, ably characterizing each one. Witzleben again spoke in favour of Humboldt, and of the just views he always had on the state of affairs.

This conversation shows that it was principally consideration for foreign countries, and, as we shall subsequently prove, for Russia, which prevented Humboldt's appointment as prime minister of Prussia, and that General Witzleben principally supported him. We have previously mentioned that Witzleben was a friend and supporter of Humboldt, and had frequently applied to him for his opinion in difficult matters; it is therefore natural that he should take this opportunity of speaking in his favour, and wish him, whose mind and talents he so admired, to be placed at the head of public affairs.

Witzleben had another opportunity of insisting on the merits of Humboldt, when the king submitted to his ministers some projects of improvement in the Prussian management of affairs made by the prince

Hardenberg before his death. In Witzleben's remarks, he strongly recommended the king to select Humboldt as chief minister of state. But the time was not favourable for such a leader of the Prussian state, and he would scarcely have been able to maintain himself in the position. His opponents probably prevented his appointment, and the minister, Von Altenstein, principally, is said to have used his influence against Humboldt. Witzleben, however, boldly opposed these machinations, and always recurred to his favourite name, Humboldt, combating the objection that as president he would have too great power in the council. Witzleben asserted that the president could have but one vote, as all the other members, and said: "It is the *mind* which decides, and that, certainly, Herr von Humboldt possesses in a high degree. But Herr von Altenstein will not fear that, or declare it contraband."

The king, however, kept to the views he had once enunciated. Count Lottum was, indeed, not named president of the ministry, for this post remained vacant, but he received the post and title of prime minister.

Humboldt thus remained at liberty to devote himself to science and to revel in the domains of thought.

In the autumn of 1823, he was in Thuringen, and visited Goethe in November. This great poet was highly gratified by the visit of his old friend. Humboldt brought with him the letters which Schiller had written to him during the speculative period of his life; but Goethe, whose mind was foreign to this speculative tendency, does not seem to have greatly enjoyed these letters, for he at this time called this speculative epoch in Schiller's life an unhappy one. Humboldt opposed him, though without wounding Goethe's susceptible nature. On the 14th November, Humboldt was invited to the court of the archduke, and was one of the first who received the great cross

of his newly-instituted order of the White Falcon of Watchfulness.

The next summer Humboldt seems to have spent entirely in his new palace of Tegel. Niebuhr paid him a visit there, in the commencement of June. The next winter Niebuhr remained in Berlin, when Humboldt had again returned to town. He writes in his letters, that he frequently dined at Humboldt's in the beginning of 1823, once with the purpose of conversing with William on the Champollionic hieroglyphics, as he took a great interest in this pictorial language, and on the connexion between language and writing in general. Niebuhr says, "One rarely can enjoy such conversations here." He admired the whole family. The son-in-law, Bülow, he calls one of the most eminent men in Berlin, and speaks of a grandchild as an extraordinarily amiable child.

The year 1824 was marked by two deaths which affected Humboldt deeply. On the 8th August F. A. Wolf died at Marseilles, as he had in vain hoped to restore his health in a more southern climate; and on the 21st of the same month, the Count Schlabrendorf followed him. Wolf had become more soured and embittered since 1817, and he certainly suffered many insults. Humboldt, however, always honoured him, although he did not approve of his eccentricity and exaggeration. He interested himself to the last for his studies and labours. We know that Wolf, during the last years of his life, was employed on the sketch for a Greek grammar on his own system, and that he was greatly encouraged and supported in this undertaking by Humboldt. But the acknowledgment he expressed at his death best proves Humboldt's esteem for the living man. He expressed it especially in a letter to Varnhagen von Ense, written on the 3rd September, 1833, in which he compares him to Goethe: "I have been thinking much of Wolf lately," he writes. "Fate has made the distinguishing difference between him and Goethe in their general characteristics. This may sound very paradoxical to you.

But in Goethe a principal feature was his divine reserve, his constant moderation in everything, the maintaining of necessary boundaries. In Wolf, there was an endeavour after the contrary, an exaggeration even in excellence. Thence proceeds his frequent, divine boldness. In Wolf, the pure and sincere veneration of Goethe was a beautiful feature; Goethe, on the contrary, was, especially latterly, very unjust towards Wolf, and did not sufficiently acknowledge his truly great and comprehensive mind."

In 1825, a new and very congenial field of activity was opened to Humboldt. A number of Berlin artists and art-friends had united to give, by annual contributions, opportunities of work to the German artists studying in Rome, having merely the advancement of art for their object. This plan was soon extended in regard to its purpose and the number of its members, and in 1825 this first plan was changed into the Union for friends of art in the Prussian dominions. At first, prizes were given only to those artists who remained in Italy for their studies, but this condition was subsequently dropped. A directory and committee of artists managed the affairs. William von Humboldt was at once appointed to the head of the former, as his artistic taste and accurate acquaintance with Rome and Roman artists had well fitted him for it. He valued this office, as he considered art and plastic arts as one of the means for the development of humanity. He even declared, that the influence of art upon the public was of more importance than art itself. He proved this opinion by his acts, and devoted himself zealously to the duties of this society. It was he who wrote the programme which was issued by it on the 23rd August, 1825, and he wrote a report of the results achieved by the society regularly once or twice a year. The first report is dated 29th January, 1826; the last, 23rd March, 1835, a fortnight before his death. The principal portion of these programmes are merely of local importance; but those portions of them which are of general interest have

been included in the collected edition of his works. They form a valuable supplement to it, giving Humboldt's views on this field of art, and are a valuable contribution to the history of art in Germany.

In the spring of 1826, Humboldt went to Silesia to spend some time in Ottmachan. He travelled over Breslau, where he made some new friends, among them the famed philologist and lexicographer, Franz Passow. Humboldt honoured his opinions as much as his talents, for Passow was one of those who bravely opposed the romantic pietistic reaction in literature, which threatened to gain ground.

In the summer we find him again in Tegel, while his wife was at the baths of Gastein, and towards the end of the year he paid Goethe another visit, and remained with him over the new year. Goethe writes to his friend Zelter, 9th Jan., 1827. "I must acknowledge that I have been very well these last days, for Herr von Humboldt remained with us longer than I could have hoped, and I thus had the opportunity of filling up a wide breach of social intercourse."

The year 1826 is marked by two events which excited Humboldt's interest, though in a different degree.

The first was the Greek war of emancipation, which kept alive the opposition against the system of prince Metternich during the following oppressive years. The public sympathy for this cause was kept down in Berlin for some time, but a change was effected herein, in April, 1826; soon after the emperor Alexander's death. Professor Hufeland and three theologians of Berlin issued an appeal in favour of the Greeks in the beginning of May in this year, which excited the greatest enthusiasm. The contributions were reported in the Berlin newspapers, and among the first and most munificent, next to those of prince August, was that of the minister Von Humboldt.

The second event is of an entirely different kind. It was more an agitation of the Prussian nationality,

but directed to the intellectual field, and bore the colours and tendency of the age. "Annals of scientific criticism" were originated in this year, under Hegel's auspices, and the first number was published in the following year. This project showed the influence which Hegel's philosophy had at that time already gained, and its striving for an increased dominion. Many celebrated contemporaries who did not subscribe to Hegel's philosophy, were, indeed, invited to take part in this scheme, and among them, Goethe and Humboldt; but these names were wanted in reality, more as ornaments. Humboldt was aware of this, but accepted the invitation on that account, to prevent one-sidedness. He subsequently wrote several articles for these annals.

The course which German philosophy had pursued since Schelling taught, was not one which Humboldt could follow. He maintained, as long as he lived, the critical system to which his friend Schiller had adhered. He was less partial, even to Hegel's philosophy, than to any other, and this is proved in a letter written to Gentz on the 1st of March, 1828. "I agree perfectly," he says, "with what you say of the annals. They contain some very readable things by Varnhagen, some scientific ones by Bopp, but, on the whole, they do not please me. Hegel is certainly a clever and profound thinker, but I cannot imagine that such a philosophy as his can really take root. I have not been able to reconcile myself to it yet, although I have repeatedly tried. The indistinct language may injure him a little. It is not exciting, like that of Kant or Fichte, colossal and elevated, like the darkness of the grave, but arises from evident awkwardness. It is as if he could not wield the language. For when he treats of common things, it is anything but easy or noble. It may arise from a want of imagination, but I would not like to pronounce for his philosophy. The public seems to be divided into two classes with respect to Hegel; those who unconditionally adhere to him, and those who

avoid him as a sharp stumbling-block. But he does not belong to the philosophers who trust boldly to their ideas, he teaches his doctrines very perseveringly. The annals are the fruit of this desire, and I joined the society to show that this was not to be its exclusive purpose. I do, however, associate with Hegel, and am, in social life, on good terms with him. I respect his talents and capabilities, without ignoring the above-named faults."

The nature of Humboldt's mind reveals itself more and more towards the latter end of his life, and it becomes evident that not the influence over others, not action, but an eminently ideal feature, inspired him. His was a thoroughly inquiring nature: the aim of his inquiries were ideas, and even his comprehensive intellectuality was subordinate to this purpose. But he distinguishes himself from the Indian sage, by not devoting himself exclusively to the contemplation of the divinity, but, like the true son of the more historical quarter of the globe, to the conceivable and practical, to the investigation of the intellectually-material nature of humanity, to the laws of human development, and the course of general history. When he did not act, he lived more in the contemplation of events of the past, and chiefly of antiquity, than of the present, more in ideas than in realities. This arose from a general view which he had early formed, that the development and perfection of the individual were the highest principle, and that the tribute even which every individual is bound to pay to the community, is yet principally the means for the development of this chief aim. Humboldt had paid his due tribute to the community; he still paid it, in so far as his activity affected the world; but he lived principally for himself and his own studies.

And in this sense Humboldt expresses himself unreservedly, in the confidential letters written at this time. He always speaks with great indifference of how the world judges what he does or did; and

we find this feeling expressed in several letters: "I am very well," he writes, on the 21st May, 1827, from Tegel. "Except the life with my family, and a little business relating to my private affairs, I live only in studies and scientific pursuits." The agreeableness of mere learning cannot be, he says, an entirely strange sensation to Gentz. He tells him that he has paved a new way for linguistic study for himself, which he must diligently pursue to reach the goal towards which he is striving. In another letter, after expressing his desire to see and converse with Gentz, he says: "I have always felt an old historical interest, and then all human affairs contract to very small importance. I see the stream which sweeps away the objects more than objects themselves. I do not think I have lost my vivacity: it arose in me because I do not draw it from life, care little for life, and am not unduly partial to life. This is now more the case than ever, though not from weariness. What formerly gave me pleasure, inspires me with the same feeling still, but because I am more ripe in ideas, and with ideas one grows beyond this life, which is not the true seat of ideas. Besides, life is an act which not only needs to be well commenced but well completed, and he who is wise goes most willingly when he is happiest. And I am very happy—so content within and without, that I have no wish which I could not attain through myself. I employ myself much with science now: but that also is only secondary, and not the principal object."

In the autumn of 1826 Alexander von Humboldt came to Berlin. He was persuaded by the king, who wished to have a scientific adviser at hand, to settle in Berlin in the course of the following year, and the wish to live near his brother, from whom he had been so long separated, induced him to comply with the king's request. He returned to Paris in December for the necessary arrangements in his affairs and literary labours.

A portion of the Humboldt family left Berlin in



the ensuing year. William von Humboldt's son-in-law, Freiherr von Bülow, was, in February, 1827, appointed ambassador to London, where he had formerly been only charge d'affaires, and where he gained such celebrity for his diplomatic skill, that he was, in later years, raised to the post of minister of foreign affairs. Bülow's wife and children remained at first in Berlin. He started alone, and proceeded first to Paris, from whence Alexander von Humboldt accompanied him to London. Both men were overwhelmed with attention by Canning, but Alexander soon proceeded by way of Hamburg to Berlin. William von Humboldt writes to Gentz, in May, 1827: "Alexander has taken up his residence here. He is more active and lively than ever, and we often speak of you." The brother remained in Berlin henceforward, although he for some time paid an annual visit to Paris, which had become his second home.

Madame von Humboldt had been in delicate health for some years, but the baths of Gastein had done her much good, and the winter was spent very happily. She determined, therefore, to visit the bath again. Humboldt, who now felt every separation from her painfully, accompanied her, as well as the eldest daughter Caroline. He purposed to use the baths himself, not for any positive complaint, for he was, on the whole, healthy, but merely to strengthen himself.

On the 13th of July, on the way to Gastein, he wrote to Gentz, that he wished to meet him there; but although Gentz was in the habit of visiting Gastein every year, he could not leave Vienna before September, on account of business; and as the Humboldts left on the 24th of August, to meet their children on one of their estates, they did not see each other. Humboldt was much pleased with Gastein, and felt himself strengthened by the baths.

He returned to Tegel, but soon removed to the town, where an especial treat awaited him. His brother Alexander gave a course of sixty-one lectures there as

the result of his travels, as has already been alluded to in Alexander's life.

In the spring of 1828, William von Humboldt made his last great journey. Madame von Bülow, his youngest daughter, had remained in Berlin, but was now to follow her husband to London. Humboldt determined with his wife and eldest daughter, to accompany his youngest one to her destination, and visit Paris at the same time.

On the 30th of May, they left Berlin, and proceeded direct to Paris, where they stayed several weeks, intending, however, to make another stay here on their return from London.

Paris at that time presented a scene of great interest. It was the time of Guizot's, Cousin's and Villemain's lectures, the epoch of a great intellectual revolution, which contributed with equal force to the overthrow of the elder Bourbons, to the foundation of a politically improved time, and to the extension of the intellectual life of the French nation. Indeed, the whole intellectual life in that capital was striving and refreshing.

And not only in a general point of view, but also for special branches of study, Paris offered a rich store of treasures. Paris was the central point for universal and comparative philology, and here it flourished most. Silvestre de Lacy, the father of universal philology in France, well known to Humboldt from former years, taught there among a new philological generation, to whom the great German philologist was a well-known and honored name. In the session of the 19th of August, 1825, the Parisian Academy of Inscriptions and Sciences had elected him, and the philologist Creuzer, in Heidelberg, as foreign member (*associé étranger*), by an overwhelming majority of votes. But he probably only made the personal acquaintance of many of the younger philologists at this period, such as Champollion, the discoverer of hieroglyphics, and Jacquet, the adept in Asiatic languages. He was especially indebted for a hospitable reception to Abel-

Rémusat, St. Martin, Bournouf, and Julius Klaproth, his fellow-countryman, resident in Paris. Humboldt remained in scientific correspondence with nearly all these men, and also took the opportunity of returning their kindness by a learned essay on Philology, which he read in the institute which had elected him its member.

In London Humboldt saw his son-in-law in the office he had once himself filled, and met many a statesman and learned man whom he had known before, or whose acquaintance he now made. The great Canning was already dead, but he met his former colleague, the Austrian ambassador, Prince Paul Esterhazy, the Count Münster, minister for the Hanoverian affairs. King George IV., who had showed him great favour as Prince Regent, now received him with great honour. He decorated him, not only with the Grand Cross of the Guelphic Order, but had his portrait painted by Sir Thomas Lawrence for the royal castle at Windsor, where it now hangs beside that of monarchs, statesmen, and generals, beside Metternich, Hardenberg, Schwarzenberg, Wellington, Blücher, &c.

Humboldt, with his wife and eldest daughter, left the British capital on the 19th July. They returned to Paris, and hastened, after a short stay there, through Strasburg to Gastein, where they used the baths again, from the 15th August to 15th September. It is probable that on this occasion Gentz met them here. The remainder of the autumn the Humboldts spent in Tegel.

After the baths of Gastein had had such a favourable influence over the health of Madame von Humboldt, the evil now broke out with increased violence after their return from their journey. The end of November she was lying dangerously ill in Berlin; in January it was again said she was on her death-bed, but she lingered till March, when her illness suddenly took a more rapid turn, and she died on the 26th March, 1829.

The death of such a woman could not but be deeply felt. The report of her death in the Berlin *Allgemeine Zeitung* contained the words:—"The rare merits of her mind and character made the deceased lady the object of universal interest and esteem." By her travels she had become connected with everything great in science and art, and as in Rome, Vienna, and Paris, so had her house in Berlin been the centre for the most intellectual and agreeable society.

But her loss was most deeply felt by her family, and principally by her husband. His love for her had increased during the last few years, but had now reached its height. It seemed as if he had again won her, when she preceded him to a higher world. Her image never again left him; it was interwoven with all his ideas, it followed him in his dreams, it occupied every hour not devoted to serious study. And the hope of a future life was infinitely increased in confidence and strength by his desire to be re-united to his wife.

What first occupied him after her death was a monument which he had determined to erect to her memory in the park of Tegel, under the superintendence of the great sculptor Rauch. This monument was raised on a spot in the park to which the deceased had been especially partial, and had herself chosen for a resting-place. In the meantime her body was deposited in the churchyard of Tegel until the monument was completed. And frequently now Humboldt wandered through the cypress alley leading to the spot which contained these dear remains; from the summit of the monument a splendid statue of Speranza, which Thorwaldsen had made expressly for Madame von Humboldt, looked down consolingly and trustfully.

Humboldt could soon not bear to leave Tegel. He retired into solitude from the bustle of the town, and lived only in studies and in the past.

## CHAPTER X.

THE death of Humboldt's wife made a great change in his studies, but it was a fortunate circumstance that many occupations and diversions conduced to fill up and enliven his leisure hours. This was the more necessary, as Alexander left Berlin a few weeks after the death, to undertake his last long journey to the Ural mountains, and did not return till the end of the year.

Among the occupations which employed William von Humboldt at this period, was the share which he was commissioned to take in the magnificent foundation of the new museum. The king, in May, 1829, appointed him the president of a commission which was to take charge of the interior arrangements in this new institution, a choice which was universally received with favour and approbation. In Berlin, it caused especial satisfaction, because it was believed that the honoured statesman would thereby be more induced to mix with the higher circles of society than it seemed probable he would do after his severe loss.

This commission consisted of the first artists and connoisseurs in Berlin, of Schinkel, the architect of the museum, of the sculptors Rauch and Tieck, the painter Wach, the councillor Hirt, and the subsequent director of the gallery of paintings, Dr. Waagen. With most of these men, Humboldt had been long acquainted, and was connected with some of them in the direction of the Art Union. He was on very

friendly terms with Rauch and Schinkel. Besides the members of the commission, the crown prince took a great interest in the arrangement of the museum. Humboldt's principal task in the commission was to direct the councils, to reconcile contradictory opinions, and to report to the king after the business was concluded.

On the 3rd August, 1830, the museum, a new ornament to the town of Berlin, was opened, and on the 21st of the same month, Humboldt submitted to the king a report of the arrangements which had been made. The king was highly gratified, and the museum honours the memory of its founders. In the hall are placed the busts of the men who were commissioned to organize the institution, and that of Schinkel, the architect, and of William von Humboldt. The bust of the latter was made by Tieck, after one by Thorwaldsen in Rome.

To strengthen his health, Humboldt visited Gastein in the years 1829 and 1830, but for his mind and spirit he sought other means of consolation. And as that sentimental feature which had characterized his youth now returned in age, he loved with increased tenderness all that had gladdened his younger years, Rome, the life in Jena, and especially Schiller's memory. He had for some time before had the intention of publishing that beautiful memorial of their intimacy, his correspondence, and had permitted Körner to publish a few fragments of it in his sketch of Schiller's life. Now, after Goethe had published his correspondence with his friend, Humboldt no longer hesitated to do the same; he prepared the publication of the letters in the commencement of 1830, and wrote his beautiful introduction to it in May, in Tegel. The collection soon afterwards appeared in Stuttgart, published by Cotta.

In September of this year Humboldt received from the King of Prussia the following gratifying communication. "I have read the report of the 21st ult., which you have prepared of the execution of the com-

mission given you for the arrangement of the museum, with great interest, and give my full approbation to the arrangements made under your direction. I have found all your propositions appropriate, and have requested the minister of religion and instruction to give his attention to their practicability, and then report to me on the subject. As a proof of my continued good will, and in acknowledgment of your former services to the state, I have elected you to my Black Eagle order, of which I send you the insignias. I wish, at the same time, that your health may permit you again to take part in the labours of the council of state. In this hope, I have announced to the council your renewed participation in its labours and its deliberations. Berlin, 15th September, 1830.—**FREDERIC WILLIAM.**”

This re-appointment to the council of state was, in reality, only a kind of restoration. Humboldt did not return to the active service of the state, nor did he draw his pension. But the mere re-appointment caused great joy among the public, though only on account of the expectations it excited; for it was hoped this appointment would merely be the first step, and that Humboldt would return to the ministry. The report was even spread that he had been entrusted with the plan of a constitution. But nothing of this was fulfilled; this would have been a reform in the system of which the old king never thought, although the critical foreign circumstances must have reminded him of his former promises. It is also not probable that Humboldt would have left his favourite labours, and undertaken the burdens of a ministry again, unless the condition of his country should have imperiously demanded the sacrifice.

Humboldt, however, regularly attended the meetings of the council of state, and was, with two others, even appointed a committee for foreign affairs; but the office was entirely a nonentity, as the minister for foreign affairs took care not to consult Humboldt on matters which it was well known that he would oppose.

We know that after the death of his wife Humboldt had chosen Tegel as his residence ; and he soon did not leave it even in winter. In the latter years of his life he rarely visited Berlin, and was seldom present at the meetings of the academy. His eldest daughter, Caroline, was with him, and was his chief support ; and his second daughter, Adelheid, with her husband, the General von Hedemann, also had the gratification of being with him during the last few years of his life. Besides this, there was no lack of visitors from the town. Princes, statesmen, and scholars, liked to visit the great man who lived at Tegel ; but he was sometimes so wrapt in his studies, that he saw no one except his own family, and even the highest persons in the state could not be admitted.

His physical condition also warned him to keep his last intentions ever in sight. Since the death of his wife, his physical strength had gradually decreased ; and his weakness visibly increased with his constant grief and his incessant mental labour. Those who saw him now in Berlin, and heard him speak publicly, could scarcely form any idea of the formerly so robust man. As if the mass of ideas which he carried with him had now become too heavy, his head fell deeper and deeper on his breast, and his tongue no longer moved with its former volubility. To strengthen himself, he visited the sea-bath Norderney in 1831, 1832, and 1833. The bath benefited him, and it seemed as if fate would prolong his life until its task were fulfilled. He worked industriously at his great work on the constitution of languages and on the Kawi language, and arranged all the mass of ideas which he had collected and made his own.

Most of these ideas are contained in the great philological work, but he had found another mode to express the ideas and feelings which occupied him. He had always felt the want of expressing the emotions and ideas which occupied him in a poetical garb, but this tendency increased to a remarkable degree



with age, and more still with the mood in which the ever-present feeling of a great loss contemplates nature and the retirement of country life. The fruit of this less sad than solemn frame of mind was a large number of poems, all in the same form, whose existence was unknown to his brother or to any member of his affectionate family. He had for several years dictated these sonnets to his secretary, Ferdinand Schulz, every evening, even when on his shorter journeys, and a portion of them have now been published. To every volume of his collected works his brother Alexander has prefixed a selection from this cyclus of beautiful sonnets, so that several hundreds have been published, and these are only a very small proportion of the entire quantity.

Two men especially gladdened the last years of his life—his brother Alexander and Goethe.

The brother now lived near him. How much they had to tell each other who had been so long separated, and, from reasons one may easily imagine, could not even communicate by correspondence. The letters they wrote to each other were rare, and were like a landscape without water or foliage. For, as is frequently the case, they did not even communicate what they might safely have written. What joy must it then have been for Humboldt to have his younger and more robust brother return near him, and see him advance on his course. We know how their studies had always advanced hand-in-hand,—how, when their paths lay far asunder, they watched each other's course with anxious interest,—and how, in the most opposite studies and pursuits, the relation of their souls could not be concealed.

Humboldt and Goethe also continued in uninterrupted correspondence until the death of the latter, and did not cease to assist each other by active interest and assistance. If, especially in the present age, there is something exceedingly gratifying in seeing two such eminent men maintain such an intimate friendship for nearly half a century, it is doubly affecting

when they impart their great thoughts to each other until their hour of death. Goethe's last letter to Humboldt was written on the morning of the day on which his fatal illness commenced, and Humboldt's reply arrived on the day of Goethe's funeral.

After his death, Humboldt seized the first opportunity of publicly expressing his views of him, and delivered a funeral oration on his memory to the Academy of Arts in Berlin. It was also the last time that Humboldt came prominently forward in public. He did indeed come to the town now and then till shortly before his death, but except for these occasional visits, principally made to the Society of Arts, he spent the whole of 1834 in Tegel, bent on the completion of his great philological work.

Whoever visited him in his solitude found him always more kind and resigned. We know indeed that his sentimental feature had never left him, but he could always restrain it by his reason and his practical mind. He had never been wanting in deep and tender feeling, but in the course of his public life he concealed his warmth of heart, and those only whom he loved and who were his equals in their tendencies found him always affectionate ; to others, though long acquaintances, he seemed cold and indifferent. He purposely concealed his feelings, and with conscious superiority treated even men who merited more, as subjects for his entertainment, so that many of his contemporaries saw nothing in him except a gigantic knowledge, a most penetrating insight, and great reason. But he was different after his retirement from public affairs, and especially during the last years of his life. Then he showed himself freely and without reserve ; even the sentimentality which had been peculiar to his youth returned. What he could confide to no one he expressed in the eloquent verses he left behind, but even in social intercourse his tender feelings revealed themselves plainly by gentleness and affection. Thus he lived until, in the third decade of this century, Germany lost, one after

another, a list of eminent men who had been her pride, and among them, William von Humboldt. Most of his companions had preceded him when he died in 1835.

He lived, as we have said, in Tegel ; his mind was clear and bright, though his physical strength had sunk. For several years he had not been able to write on account of the tremulousness in his hand, but the debility did not become alarming until the winter 1834—1835. His mind was as cheerful and calm as ever. On the 5th February, 1835, he wrote to Nicolovius :—"I am no sufferer, but live a quietly happy life with my children, and alone with my labours and my dreams, in memories of the past and happy thoughts of the future."

Living with him were his daughters, Caroline, the eldest, Madame von Hedemann, with her husband, and Madame von Bülow, who had come with her children on a visit. Humboldt's brother lived in Berlin, and within reach. Thus surrounded by a circle of loving relatives, and ceaselessly labouring to give the finishing stroke to his Kawi work, he enjoyed the last days of his life.

But suddenly the catastrophe commenced which concluded his life. A cold which he caught in February, 1835, brought on a severe attack of illness, of which he died on the 8th of April, 1835.

The crown-prince and Prince William, the brother of the king, had visited him in his last illness, and had sincerely shared the grief of the family. Alexander wrote immediately after his brother's death to Arago, in Paris : "I had the misfortune to lose my brother the day before yesterday, and am in the most profound grief. In great distress we think of those dearest to us, and I feel a slight consolation in writing to you. We saw him dying for six days. His weakness had painfully increased during the last week ; a continued trembling had showed itself in all his limbs, but his mind had retained all its native

vigour. He laboured ceaselessly, and leaves two almost finished works: one on the languages of the Indian archipelago, derived from the Sanscrit; the other, on the origin and philosophy of languages in general. These works will be published. My brother has left his manuscripts, his commenced works, and his valuable collection of books, to the public library. He died of an inflammation of the lungs, watching, with painful sagacity, the progress of the disease. His was a high intellect, and his soul was full of elevation and nobility. I feel very isolated." . . . .

The news of Humboldt's death created a great sensation in Berlin, and the newspapers all expressed the public grief at the loss of such a great and liberal man. He was buried beside his wife beneath the monument he had erected to her.

On Palm Sunday, April 12th, 1835, the interment took place. His Royal Highness Prince William, brother to the king, several generals and ministers of state, and an immense number of scholars and artists, had repaired to the castle to be present at the ceremony, and the procession left the house for the monument in the park at eleven o'clock. The hearse, covered with black crape, and drawn by four horses, was followed by the brother, the children, and the grandchildren of the deceased; after them came all those who had arrived from Berlin to be present, and the rear was formed by the community of the village, who showed their affection for him by accompanying his body to its last resting-place, chanting hymns and psalms by the way. At the monument, the coffin was placed upon a scaffolding, and Dr. Kossbach delivered a funeral oration on the deceased, in which he, without reference to dogmas, enumerated the merits of the deceased in his services to the state and to science, as well as his social and human virtues, in simple but eloquent words. The coffin was then slowly let down into the grave, where he rests, according to his wish, not in a bricked vault, but in

the earth. The grief of those present was too deep for words; they all felt what he had been to the world and to his country.

The children he left behind him were—

1. Caroline, born in Erfurt, 1792. She was never married, and died soon after her father.

2. Theodor, who took the name Humboldt-Dachröden, was born in Jena in 1797; is married, and has two children—a promising son named Wilhelm, and a girl called Mathilde. He still lives in Ottmachan.

3. Adelheid, born in Paris in 1800; married to General von Hedemann.

4. Gabriele, born in Berlin in 1802, was married to the Prussian minister Von Bülow, who died in 1846. She has a son and four daughters.

5. Hermann, born in Rome in 1809. He lives unmarried, on his portion of the estate of Ottmachan.

Humboldt left a considerable fortune, and a very explicit testament. His property was valued at above 600,000 dollars (90,000*l.*), and consisted partly in estates, which he had inherited from his father or obtained through his wife, or those he had received from the state. In his will, he divided the estates so that the portions of his sons were separated from those of his daughters. The sons obtained the estate of Ottmachan; of which Ottmachan Nitterwitz and a villa in Auleben were left to Theodor, and Ottmachan Friedrichseck to Hermann. The castle and estate of Burgörner, and the castle of Tegel, with all its treasures, were left to the eldest daughter, Caroline, with the clause that this inheritance should be left from one sister to the other. At present, Madame von Hedemann is the proprietress of Burgörner and Tegel; but as she is childless, the youngest daughter and her children will succeed to the property. Humboldt made the clause, that Tegel should remain in its present condition, and neither be sold nor divided, as long as any member of the family lives who lived there with him.

An important legacy was bequeathed to the public

library in Berlin. To it he left all his philological manuscripts and valuable autographs, beside all his unfinished works on this field, with the condition that they should be accessible to all students. Besides this, he left to it a large collection of rare books, of which he has made a separate list. The importance of this legacy to the royal library may be deduced from the fact that Humboldt, having long determined to leave these books to the library, had been collecting the works it wanted in this department, so that it was perfected by his means.

His collected works are being published under the direction of Alexander von Humboldt, assisted by Dr. C. Brandes, and have partly appeared. Some of his correspondence has also been published, including his letters to a friend, which have been translated, and these splendid specimens lead us to hope that others will follow.

And thus we take leave of this pillar of German intelligence, the companion of the greatest men whom the literature of the country has produced. We take leave of him with grateful and joyful feelings, for he was an encouraging and exalted pattern to his fellow men. Humboldt may justly be taken as a pattern of the depth and diversity of the German mind, and as the promise of a richer future for the German nation. He stands like the representative of the change from spirit to life, from idea to reality, in which the German mind is engaged, for he was one of the first and ablest who took this step. He adhered to the past, advanced boldly forward, and put his trust in humanity and his country.

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